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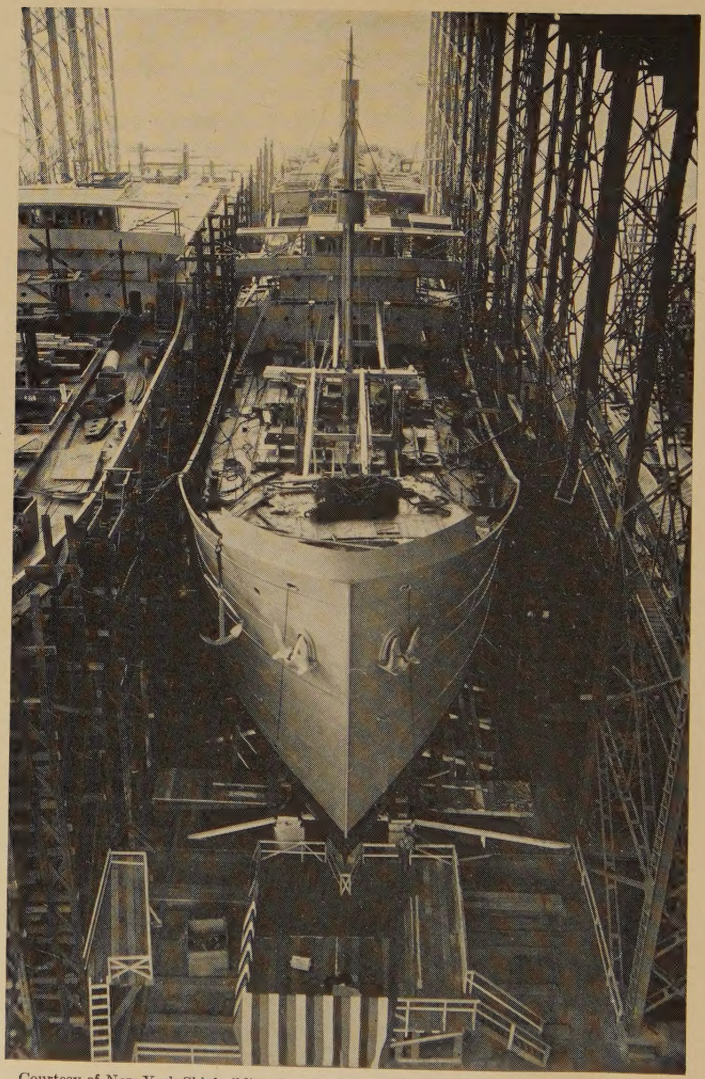

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THE MERCHANTMAN *TUCKAHOE*

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SEA POWER
IN
AMERICAN HISTORY

THE INFLUENCE OF THE NAVY
AND THE MERCHANT MARINE
UPON AMERICAN DEVELOPMENT

BY

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PREFACE

The term "sea power," though not invented by Admiral Mahan in his "The Influence of Sea Power upon History," owes its wide use to him, and no writer since his day has been able to do much more than follow in his footsteps. But though Admiral Mahan constantly discussed the influence of sea power upon American history, and even dealt exhaustively with some periods, he never incorporated those ideas in a single volume. If the present book, therefore, in its endeavor to express succinctly many of these same views seems to echo Mahan's pages, it is only because later writers can do little more than repeat the words of America's —and the world's—foremost historian of the sea.

The greater need, however, in a history of sea power for the average reader, is to connect the sea and the naval and commercial contests which have been waged upon its waters, with the political and military movements with which they were contemporary. The authors have therefore consistently tried to keep before the reader some idea of what was going on upon the land while military and commercial navies were active upon the ocean highways.

In their treatment of purely naval matters the authors have aimed to strike a happy mean between those naval histories, which relate simply the traditions and stirring incidents of our maritime wars, and those rather professional discussions of strategy and tactics which can be understood and appreciated only by naval officers,—both neglect to place in true perspective the far-reaching and decisive influence of sea power upon the history of the American Continent. The authors have not forgotten heroic deeds

but they have tried to assign a larger place to those silent and unspectacular forces in American life and character which have sprung from the nation's mercantile and military fleets. If the reader thus finds that more space has been devoted to the participation of the French Navy in the Revolutionary struggle than to the sea fights of Paul Jones, or if he notes that more details are given of the progress of the blockade of the South in the Civil War than to Cushing's daring expedition against the *Albemarle,* it is because in the results achieved the former forces stand higher.

The authors, however, have not neglected the human side, for men are, after all, the final factors in history. Such personalities as Paul Jones, Stephen Decatur, David Porter, John Ericsson, David G. Farragut, and Alfred T. Mahan have had more weight in determining the course of sea power than the ships or guns which they commanded or constructed. The authors have, accordingly, in separate biographical sketches, endeavored to trace the personal influence on sea power and national ideals of some of the great masters of seafaring and sea warfare.

The merchant marine, though usually recognized as a vital element in sea power, has rarely been given much attention in histories of that subject. It is coming to be understood, however, that it has been an important influence in our national life and a force to be reckoned with in history. With the revival in the last few years of an American high-seas merchant fleet, it is peculiarly appropriate that the large part which this peaceful branch of sea power has played in our history should be given recognition. If from the pages of this volume the importance of sea power in both its military and commercial aspects is made clearer to the American citizen of to-day, such a result will furnish the authors satisfaction and reward.

For assistance in securing historical material and illustrations the authors wish to record their special obligations and thanks to the authorities of the Library and Department of English of the Naval Academy, the New York Public Library, and the Bureau of War Records and Library of the Navy Department. Without their assistance and that of many others the present work would have been impossible.

INTRODUCTION

The authors of "Sea Power in American History" have realized the desirability of, if not the absolute necessity for, a work that would breathe the spirit of the present, and at the same time bring out the strong points emphasized by recent events, especially the World War, in this all-important question of sea power. The authors have been most happy in giving proper weight and emphasis to each phase of the subject.

Without going too much into detail, sufficient is said to trace out and connect up into one continuous story the rise, development, and present condition of both branches of sea power, commercial and naval. The authors have shown how mutually dependent each is upon the other. They show how, after commerce had been developed on the sea, it became necessary to have an organized fighting force or navy to protect commerce, and then the further development of naval strength to repel invasion by enemy naval force, or the destruction of one's commerce on the high sea by enemy naval vessels. They show how exchange of commodities was followed by interchange of ideas, modification of customs, habits, etc., the discovery, settlement, and development of new lands through commercial enterprises seeking new fields and new markets.

It has been said that men will not go to sea unless actually pushed into the sea. Careful analysis of the periods of our merchant marine will show that at each period in our history in which we paid particular attention to our mer-

chant marine, our internal conditions were such as to encourage effort on the sea, even if a trend seaward was not absolutely necessary at the moment. For example, prior to the war of 1861–65 our western country was beset by the Indians; there were many hardships tc be encountered by those daring the wilderness. While there was a good market abroad, and remembering the success of the past in human enterprise on the sea, our people along the eastern coast, yielding to the lure of the sea, rather than to the hardships of the West and the wilderness, took to the sea and built up that wonderful merchant marine that was the pride of our country and the envy of the world in 1861. The destruction of this splendid fleet during the Civil War, the production of a restless, and at the same time more or less daring spirit during this war, impelled many of our men to wander into the far West just after the war, and the great success that attended their efforts induced others to follow, so that the attraction was away from rather than toward the sea.

Throughout the book the authors bring out the significance of our merchant marine's development. It struck me perhaps with greater force because as Chairman of the United States Shipping Board I have had close contact with our present peace fleet and the many problems attending the rehabilitation of our merchant marine. "Sea Power in American History" points out this fact: Before the War of Independence we had a merchant marine second to Great Britain's, and before the War of 1812 and the Civil War, we had a commerce equal to Britain's. In other words, in three different periods of our history we possessed a large merchant marine that was a source of vast wealth to our people. In all three of these periods of our history our navy was at a very low ebb. The authors in dwelling upon this in Chapter VI state: "Dur-

ing the decade before 1812, when the war was plainly approaching, Congress appropriated money for two new brigs and two sloops-of-war to protect a commerce as great as England's,—as if a city, growing from one hundred thousand to two hundred thousand, added four policemen to its force." The navy, I think, should exist for the nation's commerce, so as to protect it and make safe the avenues of trade. Of course a sea-going marine provides shipbuilding and engineering plants, skilled artisans and seamen, all of which contribute to the creating and maintaining of the navy. But we must not therefore regard the merchant marine as existing only for this purpose.

In the spring of 1917, faced by the necessity of having "ships, more ships and MORE SHIPS" to transport troops and supplies overseas, America engaged in the most stupendous ship-building in the history of the world. That huge machine, stretching out to every part of our land, which was then set in motion has not ceased its work. Had we attempted suddenly to stop it with the signing of the Armistice, untold hardship to the workmen of this country would have been the result. Only a short time ago the whirl of this machine was heard all over the face of the globe as a world's record in ship-launching was broken by the launching from Hog Island of seven ships in one day. More tonnage was flung into the Delaware from one shipyard in one day upon this occasion than our merchant marine could show had been added to it in thirty days during the pre-war time through the output of all our yards. When this war program is completed we shall have constructed more than two thousand modern type ships.

Once more we are in a position to take our rightful place among the maritime powers of the world. The World War eliminated one of the leading maritime powers and gave us our chance to rehabilitate ourselves as a maritime

nation. Not by choice but forced by national emergency, we are to-day in possession of sufficient ships again to resume the proud position we had prior to the Civil War, when this nation played a leading rôle among the sea powers. We should be governed by the lessons pointed out by the authors of "Sea Power in American History." Acquainting ourselves with the historical development of our navy and merchant marine should renew our faith in America's ability again to sail the seven seas as of old when our clipper-ships had no peers.

The Congress of the United States in the closing hours of the sixty-sixth session passed the Merchant Marine Act of 1920. This splendid piece of constructive legislation was the result of non-partizan effort. By it the United States Shipping Board is vested with vast powers. By this Act Congress has given the Shipping Board all necessary power to develop a permanent and efficient merchant marine, and at the same time protect it against the unfair practices of other nations. The spirit of the Act is so American that I shall refresh your minds by quoting from its preamble, which reads in part:

> That it is necessary for the national defense and for the proper growth of its foreign and domestic commerce that the United States shall have a merchant marine of the best equipped and most suitable types of vessels sufficient to carry the greater portion of its commerce and serve as a naval or military auxiliary in time of war or national emergency, ultimately to be owned and operated privately by citizens of the United States; and it is hereby declared to be the policy of the United States to do whatever may be necessary to develop and encourage the maintenance of such a merchant marine, and, in so far as may not be inconsistent with the express provisions of this Act, the United States Shipping Board shall, in the disposition of vessels and shipping property as hereafter provided, in the making of rules and regulations, and in the administration of the shipping laws

keep always in view this purpose and object as the primary end to be attained.

Every man, woman, and child should study this legislative measure which again makes possible a permanent American Merchant Marine worthy of our pride. It should kindle anew a belief in our power to come back upon the seas. All over the world our ships now reach, and American vessels are being placed in established trade routes as quickly as possible consistent with good business judgment. We are spreading the products of our country so that all seaports will have their just share of the overseas trade.

We have made it our policy to establish shipping concerns in all ports so that products raised or manufactured near those ports will have sufficient tonnage to take care of their transportation. This natural flow of commerce will provide cheaper and quicker transportation than is now so often the case, when goods are sent over a long rail haul to a few important shipping centers before being put aboard vessels for overseas shipment. Some of the trade routes will, of course, not pay at first, but it is necessary under the present law to operate vessels in these routes until they do pay or after a fair trial prove to be too unprofitable to maintain.

Our merchant marine will be established permanently through the private ownership of the vessels now the property of the United States. And the law of the land so directs the sale of the ships as soon as practicable, consistent with good business methods, to individuals or shipping companies who intend to operate them on established trade routes.

Every collateral activity necessary for the efficient and satisfactory functioning of a merchant marine has been

established; such as an American Classification Bureau, an American Bureau of Survey to supervise repairs, and an American Marine Insurance Syndicate, in which all American vessels can be amply and properly insured, thus rendering our merchant marine independent of foreign aids in any particular.

"Sea Power in American History" is a theme that should stir every patriotic American. It is timely, now that all eyes are turned toward the capture of world markets. In the race for trade, let us not forget that a merchant marine is as necessary for the national defense as it is to take care of the proper growth of our foreign and domestic commerce. Therefore it is our solemn duty to do everything possible to build up this merchant marine. Paradoxical as it may seem, it is notwithstanding the truth that when all is said and done we are not nearly so dependent upon a successful merchant marine as other nations. But we must have a sufficient number of merchant ships to meet emergencies when they arise and to carry on our normal trade.

Recently a determined drive began in the public press against Section 28 of the new Merchant Marine Act. The discriminatory features of that section of the law are not intended as a club over foreign competitors. The section is there merely as a means to force our competitors in international trade to play the game fairly. It is our intention to play fair. The least we may expect is that our competitors will follow suit. Once and for all it should be understood that America no longer proposes to stand for discriminations against her ships. It would be a sorry day for this country should the time ever come when the fact that a ship floated our flag would automatically bar it from securing a fair chance to acquire a foothold in the commerce-carrying business of the world. We have in

Section 28 a remedy for just such a contingency, and should the time ever arrive that made it necessary to put it into effect, no foreign influence should be allowed to sway us in our decision to act.

The authors of this book make another point clear. It is this: Though at times, during the last hundred years, Great Britain and the United States have had serious differences, these have always been settled by peaceful means. England's support of President Monroe a century ago, her willingness to settle the Canadian border disputes by diplomacy and arbitration, her final refusal to join Napoleon III in the intervention against the Union, her coöperation with our Secretary of State, John Hay, in regard to the Panama Canal and the Open Door in China, are evidences of her good will in the past—a good will that has again been shown by her splendid service for human liberty in the late war. The century of peace between the two great branches of the Anglo-Saxon race is full of good omen for the future.

The authors of "Sea Power in American History" in their biographical chapters on men like John Paul Jones, Stephen Decatur, David Porter, Fulton and Ericsson, Farragut and Mahan, have furnished most useful lessons, lessons that should prove of special value at this time to the young Americans entering our navy and merchant marine. These young men are to visit all parts of the world, they are to be the sample of American manhood, character, energy, and integrity exhibited to the people at large of foreign countries, and by their actions will all of their fellow citizens be judged. From them will all foreigners get their impression of our country. Hence the great responsibility resting upon our young Americans engaging in a seafaring life, either in the navy or the merchant service. For this reason, the special attention given in this

book to character makes it of unusual value and interest at this time.

The history of the American Navy and the American Merchant Marine shows that some of the finest types of American character have been produced there. These men were not dreamers with word or pen. They were strong, active men who participated in the serious things of life and had experienced all its hardships and temptations, yet they show most of all an even balance of character. They were not prone to fly off on a tangent due to a single idea, but faced facts four square and arrived at sound conclusions that endure. The men of the navy and the merchant marine labor far from the view of their countrymen, especially in times of peace. And the best appreciation of their labors which the patriotic American can show is to read and become familiar with their work, so as to know of their sacrifices and appreciate what part in the country's development is due to their efforts.

The naval officer is not, as popularly supposed, a fire-eater, but is often from his wide experience in the world an earnest advocate and a diligent worker for international friendship. He is, like the upholders of law and order everywhere, more anxious to prevent trouble than to promote it.

The lesson of all naval history, as of all history, is that men more than materials accomplish results. If America of this generation wishes to achieve success upon the seas it must produce men who have the vision to discover what is necessary and how it can be achieved. It must produce men who have the same genius for seafaring and all the maritime occupations connected with it as had the men of the earlier periods when the American flag was found flying upon ships in every port.

History that is worth while, history that is reliable and

inspiring, is always the record of men of character, loyalty, and self-sacrifice for country and mankind. In no profession is the importance of character more forcibly exemplified than in the seafaring life. Careful study of the naval heroes of the past who have accomplished constructive and lasting results for the good of mankind shows that they have not, as a rule, been men of genius, but men of strong character, loyalty, and true patriotism. Such men as Sir John Jervis (Earl St. Vincent) in the British Navy and Farragut in the American Navy have been, during my forty-seven years of active naval life, the ideals towards which I have striven.

W. S. Benson.

Washington, D. C.,
July 29, 1920.

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By Admiral William S. Benson, U. S. N. (Retired)

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SEA POWER IN AMERICAN HISTORY

SEA POWER IN AMERICAN HISTORY

CHAPTER I

BRITISH SEA POWER WINS AN EMPIRE IN AMERICA

THE World War aroused a new interest in "sea power," as Admiral Mahan, its interpreter and historian, called it. This world-wide conflict verified virtually all that Mahan had said of the influence of sea power on events, so much so that his volumes, written years before 1914, now seem full of prophetic vision. Just as in ancient times Xerxes, King of Persia, and Hannibal, the personification of the military imperialism of Carthage, were conquered by the sea power of Greece and Rome, and as in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries Louis XIV and Napoleon Bonaparte were crushed by sea power, so in the twentieth century William Hohenzollern and his Prussian military ambitions fell victims to the sea supremacy of the Allied nations, a supremacy without which the efforts of Haig, Foch, and Pershing would have been powerless. Thus in the last analysis freedom and democracy owe a large debt to sea power.

The term "sea power" covers a wider range of activities than is commonly supposed. In general it comprehends all those forces in national life which tend to give a nation strength upon the sea. Under it are included commercial fleets as well as naval forces, the capacious merchantman as well as the steel-clad dreadnaught. Not only the

craft employed in the foreign trade but also the domestic shipping of a nation,—the schooners, steamers, and barges which navigate its rivers and lakes and pass between its ports, near or distant,—are an important part of sea power. This was strikingly illustrated in the World War, when the American mine-layers in the North Sea were almost all converted coastwise steamships.

The various means by which these fleets are constructed and maintained are another vital feature of sea power. Without shipyards for the manufacture of ships, without resources of the materials needed, or easy access to such supplies, without genius for naval architecture, no nation can long hold supremacy upon the sea. For the fueling and protection of armed shipping, and to secure commercial fleets against discrimination by other nations there are generally colonies and bases which greatly strengthen the nation possessing them. Such factors affect considerably the sea power of a country. The very situation of the nation itself may also be an important factor. Not accidentally have islands been frequently the seats of sea power.

The population which is engaged in maritime pursuits is much more extensive than is usually supposed. Besides the officers and men of the navy, whether they serve on board ship or remain to labor in the navy-yards and bases of the fleet, there are the men of the merchant marine, whether they are engaged in ocean or coastwise or lake traffic, and the fishermen and the whalers. There should also be added the merchants, brokers, ship-owners, ship-builders, and all those who in any way draw their livelihoods from the sea. And those men whose minds on land or sea direct the water-borne commerce of the world or command and manœuver the naval forces, those men who invent new types of ships, or new methods of warfare, those who explore the depths of the sea as others seek for pole or tropic upon its

surface, are not to be excluded from the scope of sea power.

The influence of sea power also has been greater and more far-reaching than is generally thought. Nautical enterprise and skill have done more than any other force to build up civilization. In ancient times the nations that advanced in civilization were usually in touch with the sea (witness the Egyptians and the Greeks), and over the sea routes of the Mediterranean came Western civilization. The freedom inherent in the sea also has been a stimulating force in creating and preserving free institutions. Thus, even navies have usually proved to be of little danger to democracy and liberty, and the great sea powers have been the chief bulwarks against autocracy and militarism.

In the development of the American continent sea power has played a more important part than is usually believed. Seven out of the eight wars in which the United States has engaged have been won by sea power. The Western Hemisphere is what it is to-day, free and democratic, largely through sea power,—sometimes American, sometimes British, and at least once French. The United States owed its independence to it, the Latin-American states maintained their early-won independence through the sea power behind the Monroe Doctrine, and secession in the South and misrule in Cuba were overcome by sea power. Few events in American history are entirely free from the touch of the sea, whether the touch be commercial or naval, whether the nation be Spain, France, Great Britain, or the United States. Beginning with the discovery of the New World by the ships of Spain, then the chief sea nation of the time, we shall endeavor to trace the influence of the sea and sea power upon American character and history.

The discovery of America, destined to be a curse to Spain, was to inure to the benefit of the English and the Dutch. Spain, unlike France and Holland, and especially unlike

England, showed itself in the years that succeeded incapable of creating a lasting sea power. With a supercilious contempt for manual labor and trade, the Spaniard established no industries, developed no natural resources in his new dependencies, and entrusted his ships to Portuguese and Italian navigators. He could not identify himself with his colonies. Master of the Western seas for a hundred years after Columbus, he lost his opportunity for permanent control by his lust for quick-gotten wealth and by his mismanagement of his subject races. The cargoes he took back to Spain were precious in content, small in bulk, and scattered far and wide in a few galleons,—in striking contrast to the ships of Britain and Holland, which, laden with the bulky freight of tobacco, spices, fish, and furs, returned from all the quarters of the world. Hence the seizure of a single Spanish galleon was a very different matter from the capture of a British or a Dutch merchantman. When Drake, during his circumnavigation of the globe, entered the Pacific and captured "the great galleon" on her annual trip from Lima to Panama, he got a cargo of gold dust, pearls, emeralds, and diamonds, valued at half a million sterling. The Spaniards, on the other hand, in seizing a Dutch ship were as likely as not to get a cargo of salt herrings. In other words, Spain at the very height of her mastery of the seas was a debtor nation; she had to hire Dutch ships to bring to her shores the common necessaries of existence, which she paid for in gold wrung from Mexico and Peru. "The discovery of America was therefore destined to build up Britain's sea power on the ruins of Spain's."[1]

England's mastery of the seas is generally considered by historians as dating from the defeat of the great Spanish Armada in 1588, in the reign of Elizabeth. The wars in

[1] Silborne, *The Evolution of Sea Power*, p. 95.

which Spain, France, and Holland engaged from 1572 onward offered adventurous English seamen altogether too tempting opportunities for privateering in the English Channel. And when peace came the profits of the slave-trade between Guinea and the plantations of the Spanish Main drew many an Englishman besides Hawkins, who first attempted it in 1562. Little did it matter that Spain reserved all this for her own ships; religious fanaticism added fuel to economic rivalry. Drake, the greatest of Elizabethan sailors and freebooters, was actuated by an intense Puritan hatred of the Spaniards. "To break through the Catholic monopoly of the New World, to kill Spaniards, to sell negroes, to sack gold-ships, were in these men's minds a seemly work for the 'elect of God.'"[1] This religious, political, and economic antagonism of the two peoples came to a climax in the destruction of the Spanish Armada by the storms of the North Sea, powerfully seconded by British seamen led by Howard, Drake, Hawkins, and Frobisher.

From the defeat of the Armada came far-reaching results. Holland secured her independence and began her rise as a commercial and naval power, which in turn made her develop trade and colonization in America, remnants of which still exist in Guiana and Curaçao. But as Britain had been the victor against the Armada, the scepter of the seas passed in a very real sense to her. The decisiveness of the Armada victory could not be altered by later naval expeditions by both countries, such as the stirring fight of Sir Richard Grenville in one ship, the *Revenge*, against fifty-three Spanish, or the joint enterprise of Hawkins and Drake to the West Indies,—a ghastly record of discord, disease, and death, for both commanders died and were buried

[1] J. R. Green, *A Short History of the English People*, Revised Edition, New York, 1889; p. 415.

in American waters in 1595). By reason of Britain's control of the Atlantic, her colonizers could now use unmolested the southern route to America, safer for the small vessels of the period,—the route via the Azores, the Canaries, the West Indies, and thence to Virginia, as Raleigh had named the theater of future British colonization.

By reason also of this victory, England, realizing only gradually the rich possibilities of her new power on the sea, instituted under the East India and Virginia companies that great expansion of trade and colonization toward both East and West which gathered momentum as English enterprise gained confidence and the safety of the seas became assured. Her earlier attempts had been made against great odds of Spanish interference and loss of communication with the mother country such as blotted out Raleigh's band of settlers at Roanoke Island before ships could return after the Armada. But in another half-century she could seize such an exposed outpost as Jamaica in the very center of the Caribbean, and hold it against all Spanish attempts at recovery.

Before England, however, could establish an empire in America her sea power had to meet, during the next two centuries, two new rivals upon the sea,—Holland and France. Less than fifty years after the first English settlement at Jamestown, Sir Harry Vane fostered the navy with the double purpose of checking the power of the army and furthering English trade. The English Parliament under Cromwell framed the famous Navigation Acts, directed at England's commercial rival of the period, Holland. By them, all imports into England must come in English vessels or in those of the country in which the cargoes were produced. Defeated by Blake, Cromwell's "General at Sea," despite the efforts of Tromp and De Ruyter, the Dutch still retained a very large share of the

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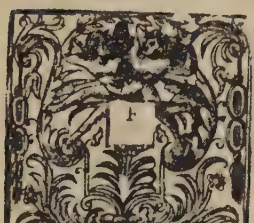
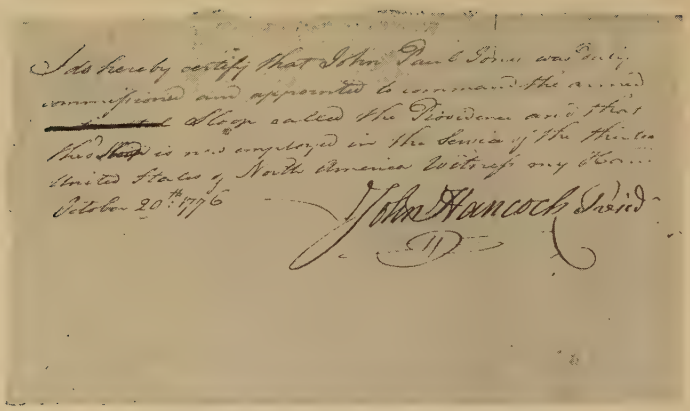
NATION.



FOr the Increaſe of the Shipping and the encouragement of the Navigation of this Nation, which under the good Providence and protection of God, is ſo great a means of the Welfare and Safety of this Common-wealth; Be it Enacted by this preſent Parliament, and the Authority thereof, That from and after the Firſt day of December, One thouſand ſix hundred fifty one, and from thenceforwards, No Goods or Commodities whatſoever, of the Growth, Production or Manufacture of Aſia, Affrica or America, or of any part thereof; or of any Iſlands belonging to them, or any of them, or which are deſcribed or laid down in the uſual Maps or Cards of thoſe places, as well of the Engliſh Plantations as others, ſhall be Imported or brought into this

Courtesy of the New York Public Library

FIRST PAGE OF A CONTEMPORARY COPY OF CROMWELL'S NAVIGATION ACT OF 1651



Courtesy of the Naval History Society

COMMISSION OF PAUL JONES TO THE *PROVIDENCE*

MEDAL AWARDED BY CONGRESS TO PAUL JONES FOR HIS VICTORY OVER THE *SERAPIS*

The portrait on the reverse of the medal is from Houdon's bust of Jones

American carrying-trade. Accordingly Charles II, justifying his action by the discovery of the Atlantic coast by Cabot, but really simply coveting the rich fur trade which reached the Atlantic by way of the Mohawk and the Hudson, granted New Amsterdam to his brother James, Duke of York, later James II, and a better naval officer than he was a king; whereupon James, in 1664, sent a fleet to secure his rights, though England and Holland were then at peace. Indeed, in the Second Dutch War, which soon developed, the English came off second best, and could not prevent the disgraceful burning of their fleet at Chatham by the Dutch in 1667. The English, however, held on to New York and New Jersey, and thus consolidated their Northern and Southern colonies.

Yet a third war was waged before the commercial supremacy of the seas passed from the Dutch. In this Third Dutch War, 1672–74, England was allied with France, but with slight French assistance upon the seas she was barely able to make Southwold Bay and the Texel drawn battles with De Ruyter. Yet, when she withdrew from the war and left the continental powers that had been drawn into it to continue the struggle, she was able to absorb most of the American carrying-trade which had formerly been Holland's. Thus the Second Dutch War gave to England Holland's most important American colony; the Third gave England Holland's American trade.

In the two wars of conquest of Louis XIV, the War of the League of Augsburg, 1688–97 (known in America as King William's War) and the War of the Spanish Succession, 1701–14 (known in America as Queen Anne's War), Louis XIV raised against himself coalitions of most of Europe. And he succeeded, as Napoleon and Wilhelm II later succeeded, in arraying sea power on the side of free peoples. In the first of these wars, in which the Eng-

lish won the sea fight off La Hogue, there were no results for America, except that William of Orange, now King of England, unconsciously helped further to neutralize the sea power of his native Holland by forcing her to contribute armies to the coalition, while England continued to concentrate her efforts on her navy. The War of the Spanish Succession, in which Louis XIV was trying to unite the Spanish crown to his own, was ended by the Treaty of Utrecht, which rearranged the map of Europe and incidentally gave England Hudson Bay Territory, Nova Scotia, and Newfoundland. But more far-reaching results of these wars, so exhaustive for France, were that England emerged with a greater commerce than ever, while French commerce had been all but driven from the seas; moreover, France, earlier in Louis's reign the money-lender of Europe, was now bankrupt. As Mahan so frequently points out, countries that have control of the seas can wage wars of exhaustion, because the revenues from their protected commerce furnish almost inexhaustible support. Louis XIV, who in his earlier years had seen France and Holland running a close second to Britain on the seas, saw before his death in 1715 British sea power triumphant. In this he had himself to thank. In no small degree the loss of New France, half a century later, may justly be laid to the door of Louis the Magnificent.

The question whether England or France was to possess an empire in America—and in India as well—depended on two more great wars, and the outcome of these turned on sea power. The first of these, the War of the Austrian Succession, begun by Frederick the Great's seizure of Silesia from Austria, started a general European conflagration, and kindled a flame of hostility between the French and the English colonists in America,—King George's War, as it is sometimes called. In contraven-

NORTH AMERICA BEFORE 1783

tion of Spanish Navigation Acts and the Treaty of Utrecht, England had been making such inroads upon the South American commerce of decadent Spain that the Spanish port authorities went too far in searches and seizures of British merchantmen. When a certain Captain Jenkins returned to England and appeared before Parliament, in his hand the ear which he alleged had been cut off by the Spaniards, the War of Jenkins's Ear began, and Admiral Vernon sailed away with a fleet—immortalized by Smollett in "Roderick Random"—to avenge the insult. With the admiral served Lawrence Washington, elder brother of George, and the one who gave to his estate on the Potomac the name of Mount Vernon. But the expedition was a horrible fiasco on account of disease and lack of coöperation between fleet and troops, and Vernon was defeated in his attempt to capture the Spanish cities of Cartagena and Santiago de Cuba in the Caribbean.

When, in 1740, the general European war broke out, England threw in her sea power against France and Spain, the traditional allies. Though England's navy was in a decadent state, her trade, now increased by the trade of the American colonies, furnished many of the sinews of war to her allies on the Continent. America's contribution was a force largely maritime and colonial which set out from Boston in 1745 under William Pepperell, Chief-Justice of Massachusetts, and captured against great odds the fortress of Louisburg on Cape Breton Island. This place, from its central position in relation to Europe, Canada, the American colonies, and the West Indies, was strategically the Gibraltar of America, as it was also called from the strength of its fortifications. Much to the disappointment of the American colonists, this stronghold, in the peace that ended the war (that of Aix-la-Chapelle, 1748), was exchanged for Madras. Thus

colonial sea power had in America won for the mother country an empire in Asia.

Every war and treaty so far had left the great issue of the possession of the North American continent unsettled. The irrepressible conflict was finally terminated a few years later by the great Seven Years' War, 1756–63, in American history often called the French and Indian War. In this contest, even more than in previous contests, England was supported by the resources of the American colonies from their prosperous trade and fisheries. They also sent their sons to fight under Washington at Pittsburgh, and under Wolfe at Quebec. And in 1758, Admiral Boscawen with a powerful fleet and twelve thousand troops under Amherst and Wolfe captured Louisburg, on whose fortification the French in the intervening years since its former capture had spent ten million dollars. With the fall of Louisburg, Quebec, which was the Gibraltar of the St. Lawrence, was doomed, for Louisburg controlled its communications. After a siege memorable for the stubborn and heroic conduct of both sides Quebec fell the next year, and with it fell Canada, the prize of sea power.

In the same year, French sea power met its real Trafalgar of the war,—an event which had as much influence upon American events as on European. The battle was staged in Quiberon Bay, on the coast of France near Brest, in most dramatic environment, a strong northwest wind and heavy seas driving the contestants toward a rock-bound coast. Replying to the remonstrance of his pilot against entering the bay under such difficult conditions by merely saying, "You have done your duty in the remonstrance; now lay me alongside," the British commander, Hawke, destroyed a few of the enemy's twenty-three ships and forced the rest to scatter and run ashore or be captured. With the French fleet powerless, and the invasion of Eng-

land impossible, the British were free to raid the enemy's colonies, and Rodney and Pocock reduced Havana, Martinique, St. Lucia, and St. Vincent. During the rest of the war, British sea power, pressing silently but relentlessly into all parts of the world, slowly strangled the commerce and strength of the French. While French privateers—another device of the weaker sea power—accomplished remarkable results, it is a fact, paradoxical as it is, that the more the French destroyed the faster British commerce increased. On the other hand, French commerce was annihilated by this war just as was Germany's in the World War. British sea power emerged triumphant from the Seven Years' War and laid on France the necessity for a humiliating peace. By this peace (the Peace of Paris, February 10, 1763) England got the whole of North America east of the Mississippi River. She restored to France Martinique and Guadeloupe and to Spain Havana, and granted to France some fishing rights on the Newfoundland Banks, the sole memento of a once great empire in Canada. While the other belligerents, on both sides, came out of this war impoverished and with no more territory than when they entered, England's sea power, besides firmly entrenching her in the Mediterranean and in India, had added vastly to her riches, and had won America for the Anglo-Saxon race.

Under the protection of a sea power such as England had thus exercised for nearly a century it is not strange that the English-speaking colonies of America had turned to the sea as a fruitful source of livelihood and prosperity. In the first seventy years of the eighteenth century their commerce on the sea increased tenfold and in 1772 equaled England's own at the beginning of the century. And in the fisheries and the whaling industry they had shown remarkable enterprise and spirit. Burke's en-

comium upon the whalemen, uttered during his great speech in favor of conciliation with America, may well represent the maritime spirit of the colonies as displayed in all the various occupations connected with the sea:

> Pass by the other parts, and look at the manner in which the people of New England have of late carried on the Whale Fishery. Whilst we follow them among the tumbling mountains of ice, and behold them penetrating into the deepest frozen recesses of Hudson's Bay and Davis's Straits, whilst we are looking for them beneath the Arctic Circle, we hear that they have pierced into the opposite region of polar cold, that they are at the antipodes, and engaged under the frozen Serpent of the South. Falkland Island, which seemed too remote and romantic an object for the grasp of national ambition, is but a stage and resting-place in the progress of their victorious industry. Nor is the equinoctial heat more discouraging to them, than the accumulated winter of both the poles. We know that while some of them draw the line and strike the harpoon on the coast of Africa, others run the longitude, and pursue their gigantic game along the coast of Brazil. No sea but what is vexed by their fisheries. No climate but what is witness to their toils. Neither the perseverance of Holland, nor the activity of France, nor the dexterous and firm sagacity of English enterprise, ever carried this most perilous mode of hardy industry to the extent to which it has been pushed by this recent people; a people who are still, as it were, but in the gristle, and not yet hardened into the bone of manhood.

This eulogy is not mere rhetoric, for it was the aptitude of the colonists for maritime affairs that contributed so powerfully to England's success in the Seven Years' War. By the aid of the American colonies, the mother country, which entered the contest a kingdom, emerged an empire.

CHAPTER II

THE DEFEAT OF BRITISH SEA POWER GIVES AMERICA INDEPENDENCE

THAT the British Empire, established at the height of its extent and predominance as it was in 1763 by the Peace of Paris, should in just twenty years give up the sections of the empire richest potentially, if not actually, would have been inconceivable to the victorious regiments of Wolfe and the proud seamen of Hawke. That this loss of three millions of Englishmen and a shipping almost equal to half of Britain's own should be brought about by the failure and inferiority of Britannia's bulwarks, her sea power, would have seemed the fantasy of a madman. Yet the event proved that in the struggle between the American colonies and the mother country the navies, as Washington at the time asserted, had "the casting vote";[1] and, as Mahan states, "To Arnold on Lake Champlain, to De Grasse at Yorktown, fell the privilege of exercising that prerogative at the two great decisive moments of the war."[2] Most humiliating of all to the proud Briton of 1763 would have been the fact that the French Navy was to prove the final instrument in separating the Americans from their English blood-brethren and

[1] "Your Excellency will have observed, that, whatever efforts are made by the land armies, the navy must have the casting vote in the present contest."—Washington to De Grasse, October 28, 1781. (*The Writings of Washington*, edited by W. C. Ford, IX, 399.)

[2] Mahan, *Major Operations of the Navies in the War of American Independence*, p. 4.

in thus reducing the predominant position of Great Britain in world affairs. It was De Grasse's "naval Waterloo" for the British sea forces off the Chesapeake in the sultry days of September, 1781, that gave the French the command of the Atlantic at a critical moment, and sentenced Cornwallis, shut up in the narrow acres of the York peninsula, to an ignominious surrender.

This importance of sea power in the American Revolution would seem less strange, especially as to the rôle which America was to play, if the importance and extent of maritime pursuits in the colonies were better known. The naval supremacy of the mother country had given opportunities for developing the natural bent of the people of the colonies for the sea. Roads were difficult, travel by sea easier; the products of the colonies could not be sold or consumed within their borders, and thus had to be transported overseas to England, the Continent, or the West Indies. New Englanders could build ships more cheaply on the Piscataqua, close by the virgin forests, than could the mother country on the Thames; they also early found the catching of fish, first in Massachusetts Bay, then farther out to sea, and finally on the banks of Nova Scotia and Newfoundland, exceedingly profitable. Thus at the outbreak of the Revolution there were, says a writer,[1] "more people in the northern part of New England—Maine and New Hampshire—engaged in shipbuilding and navigation than there were in agriculture, and Massachusetts at the same time was estimated to have owned one vessel for every hundred of its inhabitants."

It is not unnatural, therefore, that the causes of the Revolution were, especially in their more immediate aspects, chiefly maritime. The most profitable trade of the colonies was the triangular commerce between themselves, the coast

[1] David A. Wells, *Our Merchant Marine*, p. 4.

of Africa, and the West Indies. For example, molasses was brought from the West Indies to the colonies,—Newport, Rhode Island, for instance,—there manufactured into rum (Newport had twenty-two still-houses for this purpose), transported to the west coast of Africa, and exchanged for slaves, who were thereupon carried to the sugar plantations of the West India islands, or to the tobacco plantations of Virginia, and sold, each successive transaction yielding a large profit. Especially was the trade with the French and Spanish West Indies profitable, for fish caught on the Grand Banks and unsalable elsewhere could be sold to the West Indian slave-owners, and in exchange sugar and molasses could be bought at rates below those asked by planters on British islands. This trade could be carried on only by the well-nigh universal practice of smuggling in violation of restrictive acts which were passed by Parliament from 1651 onward, but which, such as the Molasses Act of 1733, were never really enforced. But with the coming into power of George III, who was determined to enforce these measures, the whole commercial and financial structure of colonial life seemed about to be shattered. Accustomed to manage their own affairs in virtual independence, relieved of the fear of French invasion after 1763, and convinced that the policy of the Grenville ministry meant ruin for them, the colonists quickly manifested their opposition to these restrictions on their maritime activity.

But when the earlier peaceful and political opposition ended in actual hostilities, the Americans soon realized the difficulties they were under in conducting a war against British sea power. Though they had plenty of sailors and half as many bottoms as Great Britain, they possessed no vessels of war; and many seamen had to enlist in the land forces in order to avoid starvation. As the colonists

had to import from Europe large quantities of clothing and munitions of war, they soon found the Atlantic and the paths to the Dutch, French, and Spanish West Indies closed by the ships of the Royal Navy. Even the coastwise trade between colony and colony was at the mercy of the British frigates and sloops that swarmed about the entire Atlantic coast, and farther out British privateers watched for American prey. In all respects in which sea power enters, Great Britain had superiority. Her military navy was far superior to that of any other nation, and there was no cloud in the European firmament that threatened her with immediate disaster. Her trading fleets, whether to the Caribbean, the Mediterranean, the Baltic, or the East Indies, were so numerous that she could suffer little from the loss of American trade and the depredations of American cruisers and privateers. Canada and the other sections of her empire were loyal, and afforded in Quebec, Halifax, Bermuda, Jamaica, St. Lucia, and Barbados, plenty of bases for the operation of her fleets.

But in the less apparent factors on which success would depend, George III found matter that disquieted him. To break American revolt, armies must be landed on American shores and must be supplied and reënforced by constant streams of ships from the mother country and her colonial bases. Also, with the multitude of American ships idle at their berths, it would be natural for privateering to become almost a trade for stranded seamen, and the English supply-ships and peaceful English merchant vessels, especially those in the West Indian trade, which had to traverse almost the entire length of the American coast, would be in considerable danger of capture. Moreover, in Parliament, and to a certain extent in other circles in England, there was great opposition to the use of force on America, and half-hearted prosecution of the war was

about all that could be guaranteed. British trade, which had begun to expand with the coming of peace in 1763, had not yet reached the prosperous state which the commercial classes felt was their due. As regards the international situation, France still smarted under the lash of the peace terms of the Seven Years' War, and European powers generally were jealous of the predominant position which Great Britain had wrung from her century-long contests with the France of Louis XIV and Louis XV. And, further, with the members of her empire scattered all over the globe she had to maintain absolute supremacy at sea to hold her connection with each of them. On the other hand, the French, though bowed down by the ruinous debts of previous wars, were strengthening their navy, introducing efficiency, and might on any favorable chance decide to retrieve their previous disasters by another war. And, finally, if the French should decide to throw in their weight on the side of the colonies, British communications with America would at once be jeopardized.

In accordance with these difficulties and contingencies, therefore, British sea power had to arrange its lines of operation. It had to maintain the uninterrupted flow of British trade from the colonies to England and from there to foreign markets; it had, also, and next in importance, to maintain the communications of British armies in America, for there they could expect nothing; moreover, it had to coöperate with the armies in the capture of American seaports, in the transportation of troops, and in the defense of Canada; and, lastly, it had to concentrate in the Channel, about Gibraltar, and also probably in the West and East Indies, fleets strong enough to meet the danger in these quarters of any hostile action by France.

The problem of sea power for the colonies was likewise difficult. For the Continental Congress, sitting in Phila-

delphia, and pondering how victory should be won, the part of the navy seemed on the whole important but impossible. In an attack on Canada, one of the earliest projects, ships were to have no part. On the other hand, the hastily armed American merchant vessels could harass British commerce, seize British supply-ships on their way to Boston to the relief of Howe, and thus assist in driving the British regulars from American soil. Further, the colonies might maintain some trade with the West Indies, mostly by privateers, and from there and Europe itself the colonial vessels would have to bring the guns, muskets, powder, shot, and clothing which any army must have in order to fight. If French aid, secret or open, could be obtained, this latter problem would be somewhat simplified. The plans of both England and the colonies were therefore subject to many contingencies and to varied conditions.

Keeping in mind these general conditions, let us see to what extent sea power entered the struggle; how, as Washington said, the navies had the casting vote; and how Arnold and De Grasse became decisive factors on Lake Champlain and off the Chesapeake capes, respectively. Naval activity began when reports reached General Washington at Boston and the Continental Congress at Philadelphia about the beginning of October, 1775, that two transports richly laden with military supplies were on their way to Boston for Howe's forces. Washington immediately sent out Captain John Manly in the *Lee* to cruise in Massachusetts Bay, and for the same purpose the Congress bought and fitted out two small vessels, the *Lexington* and the *Reprisal.* By the end of November Manly had succeeded in capturing four British supply-ships and in bringing them safely into port. Early in 1776 Esek Hopkins, who had been placed in command of eight converted merchantmen, made a descent on the town of Nassau, in the Bahamas, and

seized there a considerable quantity of war material. The earlier cruises of John Paul Jones in the *Providence* and the *Alfred* along the Atlantic coast in the summer and autumn of 1776 were largely directed against British ports in Nova Scotia, where supplies were being obtained for the British armies; his capture of the *Mellish,* a large armed ship, brought to the dwindling and despairing Continental Army a thousand complete uniforms intended for the armies in Canada. The news that this important capture had been made cheered Washington in those darkest days just before the battle of Trenton.

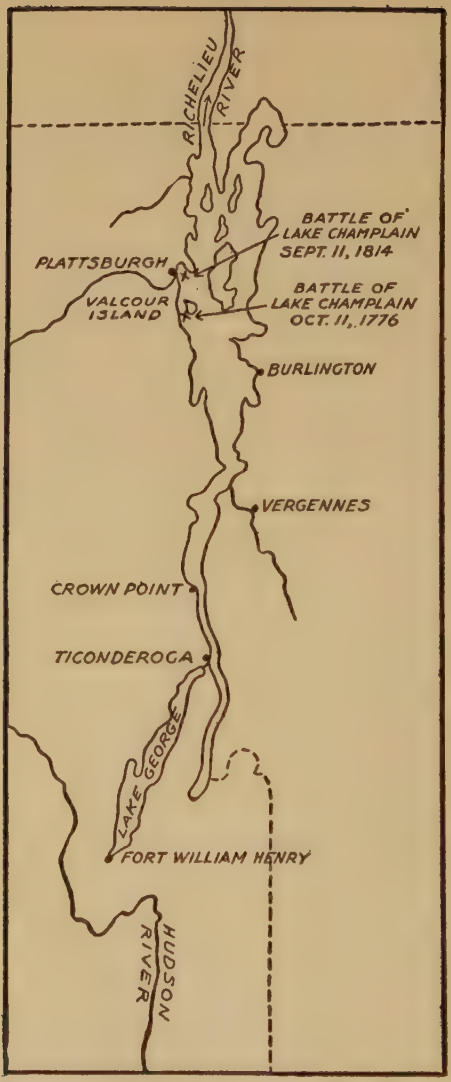
In the success of Washington in forcing the British out of Boston, the navy by cutting off supply-ships thus had its part. In the campaign which began with the battle of Long Island the sea forces of Great Britain necessarily had much to do, for as soon as the British fleet under Lord Howe was able to force its way up New York Bay and approach the East River, Washington of necessity had to withdraw his army from its isolated position, cross the East River before his retreat could be cut off by British frigates, and then withdraw from Manhattan Island to comparative security farther inland. It is worth noting, however, that in Washington's daring ferrying of his army from Long Island to New York under the cover of fog and darkness, the Marblehead fishermen, who had upon the stoppage of all sea commerce enlisted in the Continental Army in considerable numbers, played the leading rôle. Washington with his genius for strategy quickly realized that New York without coast or naval defense was untenable against a combined military and naval force.

The dark months of the autumn of 1776 were, however, to witness an engagement—unrealized as its importance was—which was to start a train of events destined to end only with complete independence for the struggling Con-

tinentals. And the chief part in this providential outcome was to be played by the man who has gone down in American history as its Judas Iscariot, the traitorous Benedict Arnold.

With true appreciation of the strategic opportunities of the situation the British were planning an expedition from Canada by the waterways that lead south from the St. Lawrence, through the Richelieu River, Lake Champlain, and Lake George, to the upper courses of the Hudson, where forces from Howe's army at New York might easily connect with it and establish a perfect barricade against any communication between New England and the rest of the colonies. As the Hudson could be largely controlled by naval forces and as so much of the rest was water, the scheme required comparatively few troops and promised great results. For such a project the control of Lake Champlain was a vital feature, and must be secured by ships operating on the lake and defeating any American naval units which might be there.

To Benedict Arnold had been intrusted the command of the American forces, and by vigorous measures in building vessels and in attacking the British post at St. John's above the northern end of Lake Champlain, he managed to control its waters till October, 1776. Then the British, drawing supplies and men from the shipyards of Quebec and the vessels of the Royal Navy in the St. Lawrence, constructed and assembled a far superior force, the chief vessel of which was a fabricated ship with eighteen 12-pounders, easily able alone to sweep the entire lake of all the American schooners, galleys, gondolas, and other armed craft that infested it. But the season was already far advanced, and winter was approaching with such speed that unless the British advance to the Hudson came very soon it must inevitably be postponed till the next spring. To



THE WATER ROUTE FROM MONTREAL TO NEW YORK
Drawn by H. C. Washburn.

produce this delay was all Arnold could hope for. He hampered the British preparations as much as possible, and he determined to contest the control of the lake, even if he faced certain defeat. Thus, on October 11th, when the British squadron came sailing down the lake with a fair wind, he posted his forces under the shelter of Valcour Island, and awaited attack. The enemy, by the very situation of the island, could reach him only from the south, and must then beat up against the breeze with all its uncertainties and the danger of being raked while approaching. All day the desultory fighting continued, with considerable loss to both sides and greater and greater inevitableness of defeat for Arnold as soon as all the British forces and guns could be brought to bear. But during the night Arnold steered his battered boats through the British line, and retreated south toward the American fortifications at Crown Point and Ticonderoga, burning his boats when they were pursued and on the eve of capture.

By the time the British forces could be reconstituted and the forts taken, winter had set in, and their expedition was obliged to halt without completing the connection with the men and ships of Howe on the Hudson. The next year when Burgoyne, with stronger forces, assumed command and advanced as far as the Hudson at Saratoga, Howe, at New York, had embarked his army on transports and diverted his energies to the campaign of the Brandywine against Philadelphia. Moreover, the Americans had, meanwhile, been strengthened for resistance by further enlistments and by the munitions of war which the secret aid of Louis XVI had sent through his agent, Beaumarchais. If it had not been for Arnold's extemporized naval force on Lake Champlain, all the British delay during the summer of 1776 would have been avoided, and their forces would have advanced south of Lake Champlain at once

and easily have gained the Hudson before winter. It is because of this fact that the daring challenge of Arnold and his sailors to British naval power on the lake was so momentous and decisive. As Mahan remarks, "That the Americans were strong enough to impose the capitulation of Saratoga was due to the invaluable year of delay secured to them by their little navy on Lake Champlain." "It [the capitulation of Saratoga] was the cause that naval force from abroad, entering into the contest, transformed it from a local to a universal war, and assured the independence of the colonies." [1]

With a few words concerning the activities of American privateers, we come to the end of naval operations which were organized and carried on by the colonists without foreign, especially French, assistance. With the extensive shipping of the Americans forced into idleness by the opening of hostilities, it is not surprising that privateering soon attained large proportions. Governor Hutchinson of Massachusetts reported in his diary that seventy thousand New Englanders were engaged in privateering at one time. Though Edward Everett Hale [2] regards this as an overestimate, he calculates that many more than this number took part in the warfare upon the sea at some time during the war. When we reflect that at the beginning of the war there were only eighteen thousand men in the British Navy it is easily possible, as he states, that in the Atlantic the British were outnumbered. Such was the gravity of the threat against British commerce and shipping. In 1776 alone three hundred British ships fell prizes to American privateer captains, and the profits of the service were so great that in some sections agriculture was almost aban-

[1] Mahan, *Major Operations of the Navies in the War of American Independence*, p. 7.

[2] Winsor, *Narrative and Critical History of America*, VI. 584.

doned for it. As the entire proceeds of the prizes were distributed among the captors, the privateers had no difficulty in securing men,—a sad contrast to the lack of seamen in the Continental naval vessels,—and the work became a business as profitable, if more precarious, than the old molasses-rum-slave voyages.

While the goods which were seized, especially the manufactured articles, often assisted the colonists in their military operations, and the sale of other articles in foreign ports helped to make credits for the purchase of supplies for America, the actual military results of privateering for the Continentals were few. In the first place, the British, who also sent out private vessels of war, made more captures than did the Americans. Moreover, the privateers monopolized sea warfare to such an extent that the Marine Committee of the Continental Congress found great difficulty in securing men and guns for its regular vessels of war. Lastly, if in place of this wasteful privateer system—carried on in single ships, for personal gain of the owners—a well-organized military navy, under a single head, had been instituted, it would have gone much farther with the ships and men available from the colonial merchant marine. It is sad to think of the glorious benefits lost to the cause of the colonists by the excessive individualism of the American seamen of the Revolution.

That the Americans could never have won their independence from the imperialism of George III without foreign aid is well known, though not always sufficiently emphasized by American historians. This is largely due to the neglect of the latter to recognize the influence of sea power in this struggle. This vital importance of sea power is established clearly by a study such as we are making. While there was much sentiment favorable to American revolutionary ideals in France at this time, the real reason

for her entrance into the war was a desire to profit by the domestic troubles of the British Empire and a strong feeling that Britain's undisputed hegemony among European nations was dangerous to France and the rest of continental Europe. This French aid, at first secret, began almost at the outset of the Revolutionary struggle. As early as 1774, on coming to the throne, Louis XVI gave the following advice to his ministers as a statement of his policy: "to meddle adroitly in the affairs of the British colonies: to give the insurgent colonists the means of obtaining supplies of war, while maintaining the strictest neutrality."[1] One of the earliest advocates of French intervention in America was Beaumarchais, the popular dramatist of the day, who in the summer of 1776 obtained money from the French and Spanish governments with which to buy guns, munitions, and clothing for the American armies, all of which were to be exchanged for tobacco,—as if it were a private business transaction. But the guns were to be bought from the French arsenals, clear evidence of French sympathy, roundabout and secret as the method was. These supplies, reaching America in the early autumn, helped to support the campaign against Burgoyne and Howe. From French ports, also, privateers, fitted out by American agents, harassed British commerce in the Channel and North Sea, and managed, though with much difficulty, which may have been French attempts at maintaining neutrality or mere diplomatic stage play, to sell their prizes in French ports and land their prisoners on the soil of France. In this dangerous and delicate business, Wickes, Conyngham, and Nicholson won fame at sea, and Deane and Franklin on land.

Upon the formal signing of a commercial treaty between France and the United States on February 6, 1778, the

[1] Mahan, *Influence of Sea Power upon History*, p. 337.

situation underwent a complete transformation. While as a result of this treaty troops and supplies would now be sure to reach the colonies, the chief and predominant result was that Great Britain's command of the sea was to be vigorously challenged, and not along the American coast but in her own waters. The French Navy was probably as efficient as the British at this moment, for it had learned much from defeat, and the British had greatly deteriorated since the days of 1763 when Pitt had insisted on efficiency. As soon as the treaty became known, George III was forced to treat the revolt in America as secondary to the threat across the Channel, and devote his chief energies to that quarter. In fact, British hostilities with France outlasted the American Revolution by two years, and Rodney won his great victory for Britain in the West Indies six months after Cornwallis surrendered at Yorktown. America became the pawn of two great players three thousand miles away. France, who had lost America to Britain in 1763, was determined that Britain should not keep it.

The decisive importance of the entrance of France into the war cannot be overestimated. Whether pleasing to American pride or not, the United States must acknowledge its debt to France, and, in less measure, even to Spain and Holland, who later entered the war. This debt is fairly well known, but the important fact that, after all, it was French sea power that was the decisive instrument in securing American independence, not the army of Rochambeau, is far less widely appreciated. Washington, if supplied with men and munitions from France, could drive the British redcoats into the Atlantic, but it was only the French naval strength which could, in the absence of sea power in the colonists themselves, block the way of fresh British armies, or keep open the lanes of supply from France and the West Indies.

No sooner had the British naval chiefs learned of the entrance of France into the war than the influence of French sea power began to be felt in American affairs. Since control of the sea lines of communication between Philadelphia and New York was endangered by the possible coming of a French fleet, which in fact had sailed in April, 1778, from Toulon under D'Estaing, Howe abandoned Philadelphia and concentrated his forces at New York. As Howe had not been able to maintain connection overland between the two cities, he had depended on keeping in touch by sea; now these communications were also threatened, and safety lay only in retreat. In fact, had D'Estaing had an average passage and arrived only ten days sooner, he would, as Washington remarked at the time,[1] have captured all Howe's ships. Even as it was, the danger was not past, for, with a superior force, D'Estaing would probably have captured New York itself if he had been able to secure pilots to carry his huge ships over the bar at Sandy Hook or if he had shown real determination himself.

In European waters, also, the intervention of France kept Great Britain on the defensive. The French had, on July 27, 1778, fought an indecisive action off Ushant with a British squadron under Keppel, and John Paul Jones, now free to use French ports and ships, was, as will be related in the next chapter, harrying British commerce near its home ports.

During the last half of 1778, the French were in command of the sea along the Atlantic coast of North America, and effectually prevented British expeditions such as Howe's had been, or Cornwallis's was to be, from sailing from New York to other sections of the colonies. In 1779,

[1] Mahan, *Major Operations of the Navies in the War of American Independence*, p. 63.

when Spain entered the war, and the British Channel fleet of forty sail found itself opposed by a combined French and Spanish force of sixty-six ships, which was, moreover, between them and their home ports, the English squadrons in America were reduced, and the mere threat of D'Estaing against Savannah caused the evacuation of Narragansett Bay by the British and their complete concentration at New York. But in the autumn of 1779 and the beginning of 1780, the British had a superior fleet in the western Atlantic, and Clinton decided, disastrously as it turned out, on a division of his forces, part to remain in New York and part to embark for South Carolina in an attempt to consolidate Royalist strength in the Southern colonies. Though he captured Charleston by naval attack, his whole success depended on retaining control of the waters between New York and the South, and the presence of strong French fleets in the West Indies and in Newport constituted a constant threat at his communications. On March 16, 1781, Des Touches with the French squadron from Newport defeated the British under Arbuthnot off the mouth of the Chesapeake, but did not follow up his advantage. Accordingly, when the French admiral returned to Newport, Clinton was able to send two thousand troops into Virginia to assist Benedict Arnold in his devastation of that section.

As the autumn of 1781 approached, Cornwallis, who had command in the South, found his fortunes wavering, and finally realizing his dependence upon Clinton in New York and upon the British fleets in American waters, fell back into the peninsula between the York and James rivers. Here he intended to refresh his troops and await reënforcements and supplies by sea.

The final act in the influence of sea power upon American independence was now to come. As Washington shows

clearly and explicitly in his despatches, "naval superiority"[1] was essential, and did indeed prove decisive. The "improper distribution" of the naval strength of the British, on which Mahan partly blames their defeat, was strikingly illustrated by the events of 1781. With both British armies comparatively slender in numbers,—Clinton in New York with eleven thousand and Cornwallis in Virginia with seven thousand,—divided by over three hundred miles of sea, and to be kept in touch only by water, the coming of De Grasse's French fleet from the West Indies and its union with the Newport squadron would spell disaster. The threat could be met only with a fleet; British ships from the West Indies must arrive, unite with those on the North American station, and defeat the French. When, however, Hood with these West Indian reënforcements reached the Chesapeake on August 25th and did not find there the British ships under Graves, he naturally proceeded to New York to join them. On August 31st, just as the combined British fleets left Sandy Hook to succor Cornwallis, De Grasse arrived in the Chesapeake and brought thirty-three hundred men to reënforce Lafayette. This made the latter equal, if not superior, to Cornwallis on land, and the fleet gave the French control at sea.

On September 5th was fought the ultimately decisive sea fight known as the battle of Cape Henry. The British ships of Hood and Graves appeared off the Capes, and De Grasse, superior in the ratio of twenty-four to nineteen, went out to meet them. Although the French ships, especially the van, straggled out and became separated, Graves, instead of attacking these vigorously with his entire fleet, kept up a long-distance cannonade in which the leading British ships suffered as much as the enemy. For the next four days, while he still kept the French in sight, he did nothing.

[1] Mahan, *Influence of Sea Power upon History*, p. 397.

At last De Grasse, who had been equally Laodicean about fighting a decisive action, disappeared. As it proved, he hastened back to the Chesapeake, where he found the squadron of De Barras from Newport with siege-guns for the Franco-American Army. Thus, when Graves later returned he found thirty-six enemy sail of the line prepared to meet him instead of twenty-four, and he was obliged to return to New York without hope of rendering any aid to the outnumbered and isolated army of Cornwallis. When Washington and Rochambeau arrived on September 14th, the die was cast and there was only one result possible,—surrender. This final humiliation for British arms was thus essentially a product of sea power, and, however half-hearted De Grasse had been in the actual fighting, he, as the representative of sea power, is entitled to remembrance in American history for this fact. This debt Washington himself acknowledged at the time, a further evidence of his insight into the importance of sea power in the Revolutionary struggle.[1]

Though Hood lived to take part the next year in Rodney's tremendous victory of the Saints' Passage and to be the man to whom, deservingly, De Grasse in that battle yielded up his sword in abject surrender, yet he could not change the far-reaching results of the contest off the Chesapeake capes. Lord North, who had carried on the war as George III's prime minister, received the news of Yorktown, it is said, "as he would a cannon ball through his heart." Shortly after this the North ministry fell through general dissatisfaction, and the war in America stopped, though the British armies remained till the treaty of peace

[1] "The surrender of York, from which so much glory and advantage are derived to the allies, *and the honour of which belongs to your Excellency,* has greatly anticipated our most sanguine expectations."—Washington to De Grasse, October 20, 1781. *(The Writings of Washington,* IX. 389.)

in 1783. Thus American independence was won on the sea. France had sought and secured her revenge for the humiliation of twenty years before.

CHAPTER III

PAUL JONES, THE GENIUS OF REVOLUTIONARY SEA POWER

DESPITE the insignificance of the Americans' own navy and its effort to fight the Mistress of the Seas, and despite the merging of American naval effort in the French fleets which appeared on the American coast after the consummation of the French alliance, one American name emerged from the Revolutionary conflict with brighter luster than any Britisher or Frenchman. Lord Howe, Admiral Keppel, Rodney, D'Estaing, De Guichen, and De Grasse are not usually remembered for their activities during these years, but John Paul Jones—or as he preferred to be called, Paul Jones—is.

The extent to which he won recognition in his short career—for he was only twenty-eight when the Revolution broke out and only forty-five when he died—and the power of his name are unappreciated to-day, even by Americans who think they know his achievements. From such competent observers as Robert Morris, George Washington, and John Adams he drew golden opinions, even though they were unable to give him tasks equal to his abilities as they saw them. As far as any one was entrusted with the command of the Continental Navy, except for the ephemeral and undeserved incumbency of Esek Hopkins, that honor was assigned to Jones in a letter of February 1, 1777, from the Marine Board, when an extensive expedition in the Gulf of Mexico was contemplated. From the French officers with whom he came in contact he received special at-

tention and consideration, and from Louis XVI a gold-hilted sword, and a decoration and title conferred only on those who perform "some brilliant action." From Catharine of Russia he received the rank of rear-admiral in her service, and from Englishmen, even statesmen as distinguished as Disraeli and naval essayists as well known as Thursfield, he has won admiration.

This recognition in the case of Paul Jones was not due to any of the usual sources of advancement,—birth, family connection, naval experience, or powerful friends. No novelist could sketch the rise of a hero from more unpropitious and obscure circumstances than those from which Paul Jones rose to be the recognized naval genius of his time. He was born the son of a gardener in Scotland where it touches the Irish Sea; at twelve years of age he was apprenticed as a sailor; he enjoyed a brief career in the British Navy as a midshipman; he commanded merchant ships between the Irish Sea port of Whitehaven and the West Indies; he donned the actor's robes in Jamaica in a period of unemployment; he engaged in the slave-trade, legitimate and illegitimate,—for the times made such a distinction. In 1773 at Tobago he killed a member of his crew in what was clearly self-defense, but on the advice of friends he left his ship and except for one appearance at Martha's Vineyard in the same year, where he touched as commander of a rather piratical crew, we do not again hear of him until he reaches Edenton, North Carolina, becomes the guest of Willie Jones, the chief planter of the section, and adds to his name, John Paul, the name of his host and ever afterward hides his identity as Paul Jones. Surely this was enough of adventure and vicissitude for a man who in 1775 was only in his twenty-eighth year! Yet this was he who in 1778 became the "sailor whom England feared" and the man who made Napoleon say after

Trafalgar, "Had Jones lived to this day, France might have had an admiral." In the days of the American Revolution, before Nelson—who so strikingly resembled Jones in his insight, sensitiveness, and dash—came upon the stage, this Scotch-American was the veritable genius of naval warfare.

Like Nelson's, Paul Jones's conceptions of naval policy and strategy bore the distinct marks of genius. Certainly no British or French officer of his time surpassed him. Rodney, who at the Saints' Passage in 1782 introduced a new manœuver,—that of concentrating one's forces upon a part of the enemy,—was almost an innocent blunderer in his discovery, while Jones saw the naval problems of the American Revolution as a whole and placed before the American Marine Board the correct course of action for them to follow. He wrote to Robert Morris in 1777:

> I agree with you that our infant navy cannot protect our own coasts, and therefore ought to be employed to draw off the enemy's attention by attacking their defenseless places. I am persuaded that even with a trifling force, it is practicable to lay some of the enemy's cities under contribution, and to do indefinite damage to their shipping. I know them to be subject to panic under the least surprise; and the business may be effected before they have time for recollection.[1]

His insight into the strategy of naval warfare was, however, best displayed at the time when the French were preparing to enter the contest. Then Paul Jones proposed a plan which might have ended the war at once, and which even when tried too late almost succeeded in attaining that result. The plan can be no better explained than in the very words of Jones himself as recorded in his letter to the American Commissioners in France, a letter he later incorporated in the journal which he wrote in 1787 for

[1] De Koven, *Life and Letters of John Paul Jones*, I. 212.

Louis XVI. The original letter was written from Nantes on February 10, 1778, soon after he had arrived in the *Ranger* with the news of Burgoyne's surrender, and just after he had received from a Nantucket privateer information that the British naval forces on the American coast had been divided between New York and Philadelphia. In it he says:

> Were any Continental marine power in Europe disposed to avail [itself] of the present situation of affairs in America and willing to deserve our Friendship, a single Blow well directed would now do the needful. Ten or twelve sail of the line with Frigates well equipped and provided would give a good account of the Fleet under Lord Howe—for as that force would be Superior to any of Howe's divisions—the strongest being once taken—the Victorious Squadron might sail in quest of the next in strength and reach it before advice.[1]

He explains in his Journal:

> There never had been, and there was no prospect of there being again, so wonderful an opportunity of striking an overwhelming blow at the English Navy. If the plan of the expedition had been adopted without delay, and a squadron despatched from Brest, Great Britain would have had no knowledge of this destructive project until after it had been carried out in America. Lord Howe would have been surprised and captured in the Delaware; his squadron would have immediately been armed from the American forces, and separating in small detachments to left and right, the naval forces of England would have been completely destroyed before the arrival of Admiral Byron. The resulting enthusiasm of the Americans would have so supported General Washington that he would have taken New York, and captured or destroyed all the English regiments in the United States. . . .
>
> . . . Thus, in a single campaign, with little expense, France would have had an admirable opportunity of establishing the Independence of America, and with a single blow to bring Great Britain to her feet, thereafter to abandon her boast of being

[1] DeKoven, *Life and Letters of John Paul Jones*, I, 257.

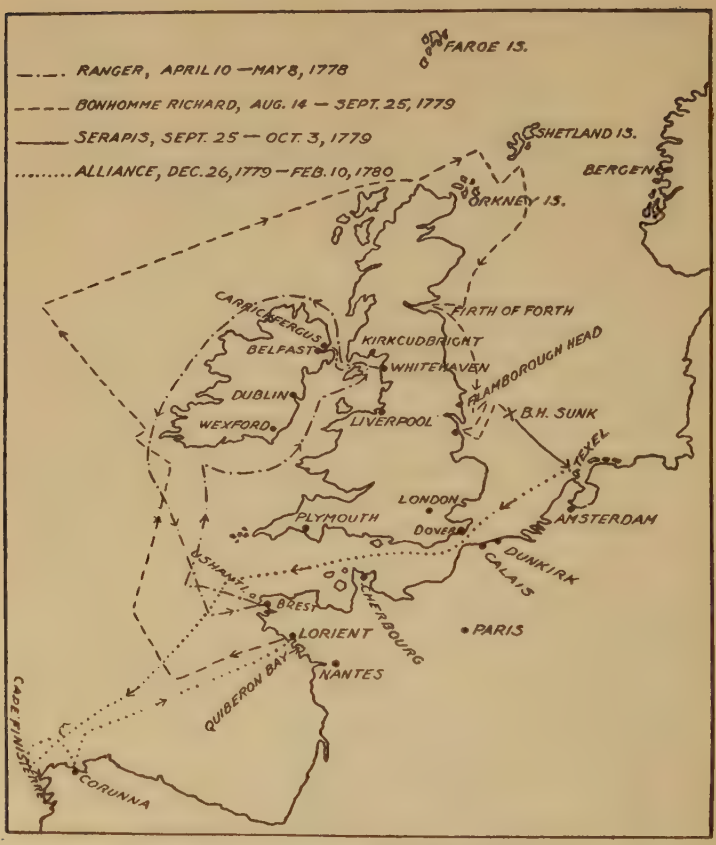
"Mistress of the Seas." . . . What will be the opinion of posterity regarding France's long neglect of this unique opportunity? Will it not judge that this fault was only increased by the adoption of the project three months later, when the time had passed, by sending the squadron from Toulon instead of from Brest, and causing a delay of at least another month? It is useless to add to this narrative of these details the unhappy effects which were caused by this delay, the general result of which was a long, bloody and costly war in which France, Holland, Spain and the East Indies were afterwards embroiled.[1]

As we have seen, D'Estaing arrived only ten days too late to catch Howe's fleet on its way back to New York, when it was encumbered with supply-vessels and was without reenforcements.

The breadth of mind of this self-educated and foreign-born American sailor is also well illustrated by his insistence on the need of thorough theoretical and cultural training for the officers of the infant navy. His emphasis of the ideal of "officer and gentleman" was far ahead of his time and remains one of the permanent heritages of his professional genius.

But Jones's fame rests to-day not on his strategical ideas but on his execution in real ships and against real opponents of these very principles of warfare. In the attack on Nassau in the Bahamas, where the Continental fleet made its first raid, it was his knowledge of the island, its roads and anchorages, which made the expedition successful. His cruises in the *Providence* and the *Alfred* were directed largely against the British bases of supply in Nova Scotia and Cape Breton, and here he accomplished much damage to the enemy. It was here also that he captured the *Mellish* with its cargo of military supplies for the armies in Canada. In the *Ranger,* in which he carried to France the news of the surrender of Bur-

[1] DeKoven, *Life and Letters of John Paul Jones,* I, 258.



EUROPEAN CRUISES OF PAUL JONES

Courses of ships adapted from the map by Mrs. A. H. Eastman in Avery's *History of the United States*, VI, 264.

goyne, he first showed himself in European waters, securing in Quiberon Bay in February, 1778, the first formal salute to the American flag from the French.

But it was in his two celebrated cruises around the British Isles that Paul Jones best exemplified his ideas of

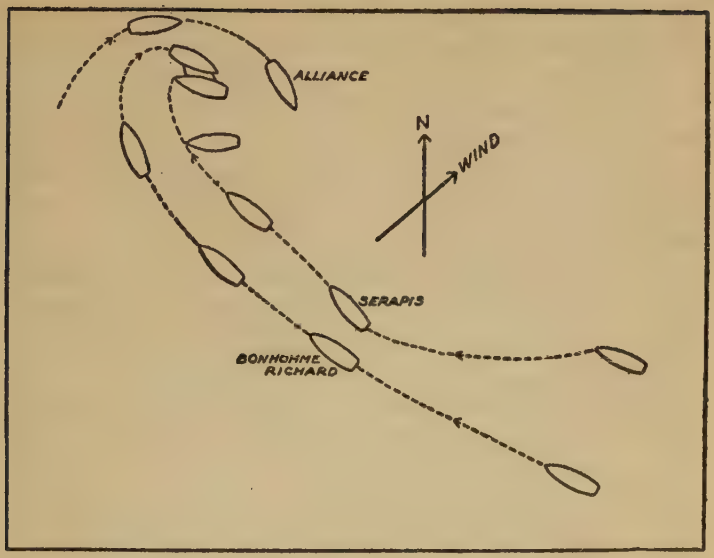
naval warfare,—cruises which stirred England as violently as the German cruiser raids on their East Coast in the World War, but which were entirely free from German ruthlessness. Realizing as he did the value of a sudden attack on English commerce and the coast towns, where so far the war had not penetrated, he sailed out in the *Ranger* for the region of his boyhood,—the area between northeast Ireland and southwest Scotland,—determined by a bold dramatic stroke to shatter the peaceful dreams of complacent Britons and to destroy throughout Europe the invincibility of British sea power. After his attempted raid on the shipping at Whitehaven had failed and he had been unlucky enough not to find the Earl of Selkirk at home when he went to capture him as a hostage to secure the exchange of American prisoners then languishing in vile English prisons, he saw, off the northeast corner of Ireland, the British sloop of war, *Drake*, poorly manned and poorly prepared for battle, coming out to meet his "pirate ship." A few nights before he had boldly sailed into Belfast Lough and almost boarded the *Drake* in a night attack, but when the wind carried him too far ahead of his enemy he had, without detection, worked his ship back out of the bay. On April 24, 1778, when the *Drake* finally offered battle, Jones secured a raking position off her bows, and then ranged alongside, all the time pouring in effective broadsides. In an hour and five minutes the *Drake* lost most of her masts and rigging, as well as forty-two men killed or wounded out of about a hundred and seventy-five. Thereupon she surrendered, for her higher officers were all wounded, and an American prize crew navigated her back to France, a visible token of American sea power in its fighting moods. As Mrs. DeKoven remarks, "Jones was, in fact, the most formidable enemy which England then possessed upon the sea." To destroy

British prestige upon the very waters of the British Isles was the most effective method of securing continental opposition to British supremacy.

Paul Jones, moreover, as soon as France was allied with the colonies, evolved still further plans for bringing the war home to Englishmen, especially to the commercial classes, in his proposed raids against the Baltic fleets, the Iceland fishery, the Hudson Bay ships, and the West Indian trade. As before, he felt that a few American raiders might alarm British trade sufficiently to stir the merchants and drive them into strong opposition to the war, for which the Tories—the landed gentry, who felt the effects of war least—were primarily responsible.

Though at first Paul Jones hoped for a considerable force of French ships under his command, he was at last resigned to accept the old hulk *Duras* and to take the scrapped guns of the French arsenals. Thus equipped, and in like fashion furnished with a motley crew of Frenchmen, Englishmen, Maltese, Portuguese, Malays, and some recently exchanged American prisoners, he sailed in nominal command of a force of five small ships, the best of which was the American-built *Alliance* commanded by Pierre Landais, an erratic and insubordinate Frenchman. Circling west and north around the British Isles, and then sailing down the eastern coast, on September 23, 1779, he found the Baltic convoy of merchantmen off Flamborough Head, and by sunset was engaged with the *Serapis,* a frigate of fifty guns and as new as his ship, now renamed the *Bonhomme Richard,* was old.

Already deserted by all his ships except one which engaged a smaller British vessel, he waited for the *Serapis* to come upon his starboard quarter, and then poured in a broadside. The two frigates soon came together and were lashed side by side by Jones himself, for he saw hope of



THE CAPTURE OF THE *SERAPIS* BY THE *BONHOMME RICHARD*

victory only in a close action where the British superiority in sailing would be nullified. Even after his larger guns had burst or been abandoned for fear they would burst, and even after his lower deck had almost been shot out of his ship by the British fire, Paul Jones maintained fire with his three remaining guns on his spar-deck, and soon swept the British deck clear of all opposition. Meantime acting in the spirit of, if not actually uttering the words, "I have not yet begun to fight," he encouraged his men in the tops to clear the rigging of the *Serapis* and keep the enemy below. Soon a hand-grenade from this source was hurled through an open hatch down upon the gun-deck of the *Serapis,* the deck from which her chief fire was coming, ignited the powder lying there, and almost blew the ship up. Pearson, the British commander, who had seen

the *Alliance* circle around the two combatants and fire broadsides which struck the British frigate,—and the *Bonhomme Richard* also, as Jones proved afterward,—felt that he was in the presence of superior forces and surrendered in sight of the English coast to a man whose ship had been kept from sinking only by the forced labors at the pumps of British prisoners numerically superior to his entire crew when the battle began.

Though Jones had to transfer his men to the *Serapis* the next day and see his own ship sink beneath the waters of the North Sea,—her colors still flying,—the capture reflected more glory on Paul Jones than did the affair of the *Drake* and aided materially in stimulating European efforts to curb the sea supremacy of Great Britain. When Jones, after taking the *Serapis* to the Texel, sailed through the English Channel, and himself appeared in Paris, he became the lion of the hour, the cynosure of eyes as distinguished as those of Marie Antoinette, and the favorite of all except the French officers who were chafing at the lack of French naval achievement thus far in the war. Welcomed to the presence of Louis XVI, at frequent intervals, he charmed every one by his grace and geniality.

At this time Paul Jones was at the height of his reputation, for never again in his lifetime did he have opportunity to achieve a striking success. In all the vicissitudes of his subsequent career,—his return to America, his mission to Europe regarding prize-money, his service in the Black Sea with the Russian Navy in its war against the Turks, and his last months in Paris, where he died in 1792,—he never again was given the chance to show his real ability, and passed away, doubtless, with disappointment in his heart, though, as we now know, he had been the spiritual, and largely the material, father of the American Navy.

What were the secrets of character which enabled Paul Jones to rise from a miserable West Indian merchant sailor in the year 1768 to the most brilliant naval commander in Europe in 1779, and to leave behind him the name of Britain's most formidable enemy on the sea, creator of the American Navy, friend of Louis of France and Catharine of Russia, trusted adviser of Lafayette and Washington? One secret of his genius was that he possessed a passionate curiosity which drove him to master every matter and every accomplishment that presented itself. With an ever-active mind, he never felt content with his professional knowledge, and in 1775 and 1778 he asked to accompany the fleets of Hopkins and D'Orvilliers respectively to perfect himself in naval practice. And he did not rest until the principles of naval strategy were familiar to him, though there were no fleets for him to command or campaigns to direct. Conspicuously among the sailors of his day he believed that victories are thought out before they are fought out.

With this intellectual quality went ambition that never palled, a fierceness of desire to become great and be recognized as great which drove him on in every action of his career. Never ready for repose, but always greedy of honor, he was willing to pay the price in hardship and battle risk if only the path of glory opened before him. Thus animated, he could hardly lack pride, and fail to feel angry at every act of favoritism, and every form of political or sectional bias, which deprived him of opportunities for distinguished conduct. It is true that his unfair subordination in rank to men from the Northern colonies at the beginning of the Revolution embittered his active career, as did similar favoritism during his months in the Russian Navy, but this was the penalty that had to be paid for Paul Jones's obsession for achievement. To such ambition the slightest detail in naval routine or

etiquette was of importance, and one need not wonder that Jones was most exacting in regard to the behavior of officers and men toward him and in all his relations with foreign naval officers. Only the perfect satisfied his professional conscience.

In this stirring of soul and intensity of spirit, Carlyle, if he had studied Paul Jones, would have found those very qualities whose absence seemed to him to make Washington a personage of so little importance. Rankling in Jones's breast from the date of his earliest letters is the mystery of his birth, his feeling that he was the son of a gentleman, perhaps his later patron, the Earl of Selkirk himself. This pride he felt outraged when he was treated as though on any lower level. A partial factor in this resentment against society was his experience in the West Indies before 1775, when becoming involved in disputes with various crews he commanded, he was twice accused of murder. Though he was guiltless in both cases, was acquitted in the first, and in the second case had, it was clear, struck in self-defense, he felt that he was still branded as a murderer. Few letters lay bare a man's soul as does Jones's to Franklin in 1779, where in reply to a playful but innocent remark of Franklin's Jones, thinking Franklin has heard the story and believes it, unbares his past and relates in detail what he calls "the great misfortune of my life" [1]—the killing at Tobago of a member of his crew who was leading a mutiny and was about to strike him down. Contributing to this same conflict of personality was the consciousness that in England he was regarded as a pirate, a renegade who came back to sack the home of his childhood. Yet Jones never killed a man on English soil, and when his sailors carried off the

[1] Correspondence of Benjamin Franklin, Philadelphia Philosophical Society, Letter 176. Also in DeKoven's *Life and Letters of Paul Jones*, II. Appendix B

Selkirk silver plate he bought it back from them and returned it with a courteous letter.

In his political ideas he was not only filled with a sturdy love for his adopted country but was, like Jefferson, enthusiastic over the new conceptions of freedom and democracy which America proclaimed to the world. "I have drawn my sword in the present generous struggle for the rights of men," and "I am ready to sacrifice my life also with cheerfulness, if that forfeiture could restore peace and good-will among mankind,"[1] he writes the Countess of Selkirk in 1778, assuming a tone of polite familiarity which offended Lady Selkirk, who did not understand the feelings of Jones toward her house. In his advanced attitude toward national ideals and democracy, Jones was in great contrast to Nelson, who could never think of a Frenchman except as a libertine and a blasphemer.

The marks of genius, moreover, showed themselves not only in Jones's ideas and actions but in his very presence. On the quarter-deck, as commander of a ship, he stood peerless. Professor Laughton, who has charged Jones with piracy in his operations around Great Britain, and who cannot be regarded as a friendly critic, says, "It was Jones, and Jones alone, who won the battle of the *Bonhomme Richard* and the *Serapis*."[2] He was in all respects a real leader of men. Different as he was in temperament and mind from his raw crews, he yet radiated from his very presence obedience, discipline, and heroism. No man fought battles with crews more heterogeneous or with elements so antagonistic and jealous. Yet he came off victor in the *Ranger-Drake* action, after his crew had virtually refused to fight an armed ship; he won the *Serapis* when

[1] Jones to Lady Selkirk, Brest, May 8, 1778, *Memoirs of Paul Jones*, I, 90–1.

[2] Laughton, *Studies in Naval History*, p. 403.

his crew had lost heart and his petty officers even suggested surrender. Concealed somewhere in that slight body with its rather delicate features and romantic eyes, was a personal magnetism which with dynamic power repelled revolt and energized resistance on the decks of frail frigates, and enlisted in the support of liberty great ladies of the court of France and great leaders of nations which hated Englishmen. There was about this man an attractiveness, a depth of feeling, a modesty, and a simplicity which drew to him strangers such as Willie Jones, the elegant Southern planter, Robert Morris, the shrewd Philadelphia business man, and Marie Antoinette, the frivolous queen.

Paul Jones rests to-day in the mausoleum prepared for him at Annapolis, as the great example of naval genius surmounting all obstacles which even the most fertile imaginations might place in the path of the ambitious, and as a perpetual voice of encouragement to those youths who, as they muse upon him and his victories, may at least dimly realize the decisive part a man of genius may play in the work of the sea to which they have dedicated their lives.

CHAPTER IV

THE RISE OF COMMERCIAL SEA POWER IN AMERICA DURING THE NAPOLEONIC WARS

THOUGH the American Navy in the years of the Revolution had, assisted largely by France, acquitted itself well and produced from its ranks Paul Jones, the naval commander of the time most deserving the name of genius, American sea power, in the commercial sense—meaning by that term the merchant marine and the commerce which depends on it—was destined in the years that succeeded the Revolution to achieve far more brilliant success. Just as before the Revolution the maritime interests of the colonies were almost their chief activity, so as soon as peace came with the mother country, American sea power as commercially constituted quickly assumed distinctly the first place in the national life. This merchant shipping, as soon as the wars between England and France began, saw its opportunity, and by 1803 was, with no exceptions, the great carrier of the world's goods. Despite the efforts of England to retain her commercial supremacy on the sea highways, the United States, through its inherent advantages for sea traffic, and despite vexatious restrictions and confiscations by both belligerents, achieved a power at sea that was, more than is usually appreciated, the real basis on which its later commercial prosperity, and especially the naval successes of the War of 1812, were established.

It is safe to say that no merchant navy, from the days

of Carthage to the rise of German commercial sea power in the last years of the nineteenth century, ever overcame so many difficulties, or achieved such brilliant results in so short a period of time. Deprived of the preferential benefits of being part of the British Empire; belonging to a country composed of thirteen quarreling states, each of which was supreme in its control of commerce and shipping; without naval forces to protect it; the prey of pirates in the entire seven seas; the innocent third party in the wars that raged almost continually from the day when the French revolutionists, by the execution of Louis XVI, made an end of monarchy in France, until Napoleon saw the desolate shores of St. Helena,—it still flourished. Robbed of its ships and cargoes if it did not submit to search by British cruisers, and robbed of both ship and cargo by French vengeance if it did *so* submit; its best seamen plucked from it for the decks of British frigates before the highlands of New Jersey or the gleam of Boston Light faded from view; even—to cap a dismal climax—forced into idleness and starvation by the acts of the American Congress and President,—is it strange that the American merchant marine has seemed to some writers to have been characterized during this period by poltroonery and disaster of which every American should be ashamed if it had not been relieved by the glories of the War of 1812?

Yet it is but fair to say that a more careful view of the period, even with an appreciation of all these disadvantages and disasters, shows that it was a time of triumph and that not only did the naval forces of the nation do creditable work but commercially the United States throve on just this sort of opposition; and in 1810, after having for much of the previous decade dominated the carrying-trade of the world, its merchant marine was actually greater in tonnage than in any year of the next thirty-seven. And

from the enterprise of American merchant sailors arose the cloud—smaller than a man's hand—which gave warning of the overthrow of Napoleon himself.

The new conditions that the American merchant marine faced when peace was declared in 1783 were far different from what they had been at the end of the Seven Years' War only twenty years earlier. To be sure, Americans were assured of participation in the Newfoundland fisheries, but their whole relation to Great Britain was otherwise reversed. The Navigation Acts, which they had violated in prerevolutionary days but which had at least protected them from foreign competition, now sheltered them no longer, and Britain herself became a formidable competitor, who had advantage in every market. The chief trade of the colonies had been the trade with the West Indies, and from this trade, so far as it concerned the British islands, they were now excluded. Furthermore, the British Navy no longer protected them against the pirates who infested the West Indies, and especially the Mediterranean, and who now swarmed about the American merchant ship with confidence that no injury would be punished. Lastly, the British ministry that succeeded Pitt's in 1783 clapped prohibitive duties on American goods entering British ports in American vessels. At the same time British ships filled with British goods—for which there was a great demand as soon as the peace of 1783 came—thronged American harbors, and, as they could carry back American products without paying the English import duties imposed on American exports, effectually prevented any competition from Americans. And worst of all, the British allowed an American vessel to bring to England only the product of its own state,—a great hardship where most of the ships were owned in New England and most of the exported products were found in the South.

This melancholy condition of America's chief activity, commerce, led directly to the formation of the Constitution itself. As each state was a law unto itself in regard to foreign and domestic commerce and might impose tonnage taxes not only on British ships but also on the ships of other states entering its ports, no common and effective retaliation could be offered to British sea power and its commercial avarice. The Annapolis Convention, which led directly to the Constitutional Convention of 1787, was therefore brought about partly by the restrictions on trade between the states but also by the inability of Virginia to control foreign ships loading on its side of the Potomac. Reënforcing this immediate need, came the recognition of the necessity for a common commercial policy for the whole United States. Since the Articles of Confederation were insufficient, the few delegates who met in Annapolis in September, 1786, adjourned after urging the calling of a Constitutional Convention.

The Constitution finally framed cured the difficulties which produced the Annapolis Convention. The Federal Government was given power "to regulate commerce with foreign nations and among the several States, and with the Indian tribes." The states were forbidden, with slight exceptions, to "lay any impost or duties on imports or exports"; nor were they without the consent to Congress to "lay any duty of tonnage." Thus was the field cleared for a growing merchant marine which should serve the interests of the whole country, rather than those of any particular state. Furthermore, the Congress in its first real legislative act, provided for the protection and encouragement of American ships. It allowed a discount of ten per cent. of the tariff duties upon imports brought to this country in ships built and owned by American citizens. Taking a leaf out of the British practice, Congress also gave the American

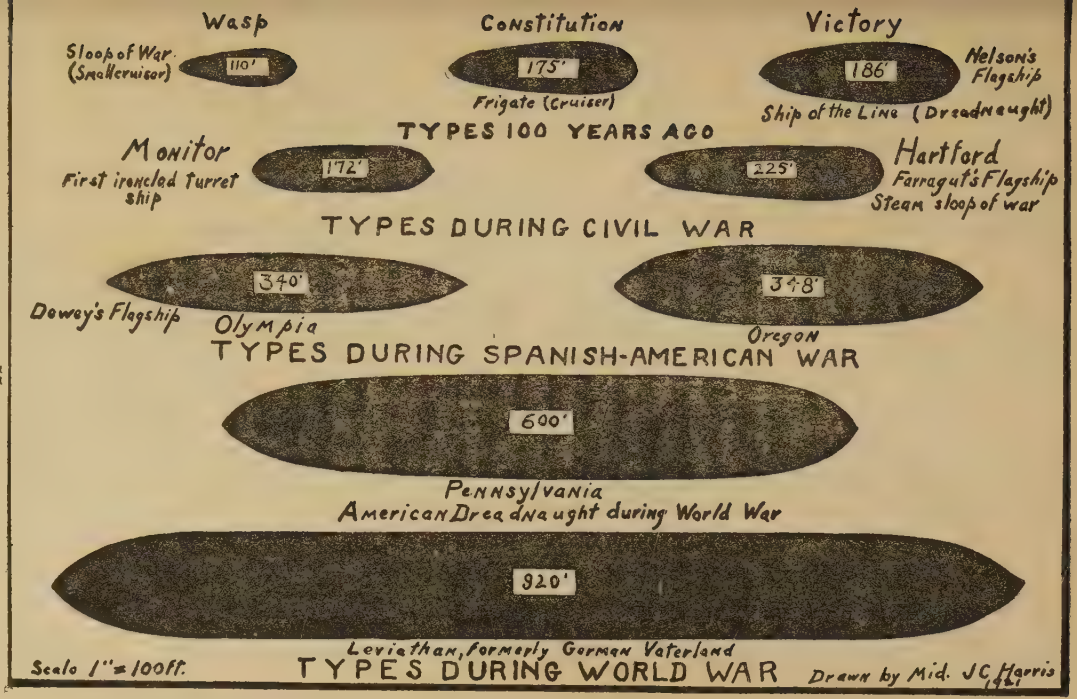
ships engaged in the tea trade with China and the East Indies the advantage of a considerable reduction in duties, especially if the tea came directly from these Eastern countries.

The results of these measures, especially the stabilizing influence of the Constitution and the preferential tariff, were soon felt. In the one year between December 31, 1789, and December 31, 1790, the American tonnage registered for the foreign trade more than doubled. In 1789, England had nearly a hundred thousand tons of shipping in the American trade; in 1796, only one fifth as much. As Mr. H. C. Adams says in his "Taxation in the United States": "The growth of American shipping from 1789 to 1807 is without parallel in the history of the commercial world."

It is not surprising, therefore, that new exploits were recorded to the credit of American ships and sailors, who, trained in the long traditions of colonial seafaring and hardened by the bitter experiences of the Revolution, sought new markets and new seas for the pursuit of gain and adventure. In the years 1787,–88,–89,–90, Captain Robert Gray of Boston in the ship *Columbia* won the honor of piloting the first American vessel around the world. Sailing from Boston to the west coast of North America, he discovered the Columbia River, thus establishing our claim to the Oregon territory, traded with the Indians for furs, sailed across the Pacific to China, where he disposed of his valuable cargo, and then returned home around the Cape of Good Hope. From just about this time, also, dates the beginning of the American East Indian trade, a trade where seamanship, fighting ability, commercial shrewdness, and an indomitable courage that could carry an enterprise through against innumerable odds, were necessary for success. The ship must be sound to stand the rapid inroads

of tropical insects; the captain must be a skilful navigator, for many ships were so small that nowadays we should hesitate to leave sight of land in them; he must also be a shrewd business man who could sell and purchase three or four cargoes in the course of one voyage, keep the interests of the owners always before him, and know how to deal with the European trader, the Chinese merchant, and the Malay chief. He must also be a commander able to retain the respect and obedience of vigorous young Americans who looked forward to lives, not before the mast, but as captains and traders themselves. In the long voyage that might consume years, he must decide everything himself without communication with the owners in America, and a turn of fortune or a failure of judgment might spell the difference between wealth and bankruptcy.

With the beginning of war between England and the French Republic in 1793, American sea power encountered all the opportunities and all the vicissitudes of the neutral nation in wartime. Its trade and its profits increased because of its neutral character, and because of the greater drain on the merchant marines of the warring forces to supply the needs of their navies. Each country tried to stamp out neutral trade with its enemy, but desisted after less than a year and then adopted a policy of using the neutral for its own advantage and preventing such advantages for the enemy. The chief blow which the American ship-owner and trader felt, however, was the revival by Great Britain of the old Rule of 1756. Before hostilities began, France prohibited the trade between the French West Indies and France to American vessels, in fact to all except the French marine. With the breaking out of war France opened this trade to the world, which meant to America, as the latter was the chief neutral with a mercantile fleet. But Great Britain thereupon revived the



A CENTURY IN NAVAL CONSTRUCTION

as illustrated by famous ships drawn to same scale

Rule of 1756, which said that in war a neutral should not enjoy a carrying-trade which was prohibited it in time of peace. Some of these grievances were alleviated by Jay's treaty with England, which went into force in 1795, but England and the United States could not agree on the trade with the British West Indies, and commerce continued to be carried on without legal authority and subject to frequent interruption.

And the treaty negotiated by Jay roused the anger of the French Directory, and produced fresh assaults on American ships in the West Indies from French privateers and cruisers. The result was the so-called Naval War with France, recounted in the next chapter, which, however, secured some added security for American commerce. The unsettled conditions in the Mediterranean due to the European conflict also gave freer rein to the pirates of the North African states, with whom the United States concluded various treaties, generally paying heavily for slight immunity from their depredations. Finally in 1801–5 the United States fought Tripoli and destroyed this danger to American trade.

So great, however, was the demand for maritime carriers during the French Revolutionary struggle, and so insufficient the supply of European vessels, that the period from 1793 to 1805 saw the tonnage of the merchant fleets of the young republic increase every year with one slight exception, and more than double in the twelve years. The secret was the so-called "broken voyage." Although by the Rule of 1756, American vessels could no longer carry the sugar, molasses, and other products of the French, Spanish, and Dutch West Indies directly to European countries, yet, as was decided by the British Admiralty courts in the case of the American ship *Polly* in 1800, the cargo of sugar and cocoa which she was carry-

ing from Cuba to Spain could not be seized by the British, because, after leaving Havana, she had landed her cargo in Marblehead, paid duty on it, repaired, reloaded, secured a new clearance, and begun her voyage anew. Though this added to the cost of the goods to the consumer, there were no competing ships which could make the direct voyage, and American ship-owners and skippers grew rich on the profits of this trade. As a result of this device, when England and Napoleon once more went to war in 1803, the whole carrying-trade of Europe fell into American hands. McMaster says:

> The merchant flag of every belligerent, save England, disappeared from the sea. France and Holland absolutely ceased to trade under their flags. Spain for a while continued to transport her specie and her bullion in her own ships, protected by her men-of-war. But this, too, she soon gave up, and by 1806 the dollars of Mexico and the ingots of Peru were brought to her shores in American bottoms. It was under our flag that the gum trade was carried on with Senegal; that the sugar trade was carried on with Cuba; that coffee was exported from Caracas; and hides and indigo from South America. From Vera Cruz, from Cartagena, from La Plata, from the French colonies in the Antilles, from Cayenne, from Dutch Guiana, from the Isles of France and Réunion, from Batavia and Manila, great fleets of American merchantmen sailed for the United States, there to neutralize the voyage and go on to Europe.[1]

With the entire commercial structure of the United States organized on the basis of the "broken voyage," it is not surprising that the decision in the case of the *Essex*, in 1805, produced panic in America and inflamed the country against England so thoroughly that Jefferson was enabled to embark upon the series of retaliatory measures of non-intercourse and embargo which ended only with the declaration of war in 1812. The *Essex*,

[1] McMaster, *History of the People of the United States*, III, 224.

with a cargo which she had secured in Barcelona, was on her way to Havana. After having stopped at Salem, Massachusetts, in the regular way, landed her goods, and paid the duty, she underwent repairs, and cleared for Havana as in every case of "broken voyage." But, when seized and libeled by the British, she was condemned as a prize inasmuch as the cargo had never been intended for sale in the United States, but had been sent from Spain for the Cuban market. Thus intention was made a new element in construing an old precedent, and the voyage became one prohibited by the Rule of 1756.

This was the first of several measures adopted by Great Britain to strangle the influx of foreign and colonial products into the countries controlled by Napoleon and to secure for herself as far as possible, and especially by acting as a middleman, the trade which the neutral American marine was now snatching from her grasp. In 1806 she declared by an Order in Council a "paper blockade" of all the European coast from Hamburg to Brest, in so far—and this shows her commercial purpose—as vessels brought there anything not a product of their own lands, or goods that had not been manufactured in Great Britain. Again in 1807, another Order in Council forbade neutrals to trade between any two enemy ports, and, this not sufficing, in the same year, a third Order in Council excluded neutrals from all enemy ports unless their ships stopped first in a British port, paid certain duties, and secured a trading license from the British authorities.

Remembering the *Essex* interpretation of a direct or "continuous" voyage,—as it was later called when the United States adopted it in the Civil War and used it against England,—a lesson England learned so well that she revived it most opportunely in the early years of the World War, when the United States again became the

great neutral carrier and England was again fighting the land power of a continental despot,—we can easily see the handicaps under which the American merchant fleets operated. Yet, as the exceptions indicate, England did not endeavor to prohibit all commerce with Napoleon's domains, but tried to make such trade pay toll in English ports on its way to and from the Continent. Since England, then, as now, perhaps more then than now, was chiefly dependent on her commerce and the interchange of products in the markets of Liverpool and London,—even more than on her manufacturing, for the Industrial Revolution was only gaining impetus in these years,—she realized that she must have trade to live, and must trade even with the enemy to sustain her commercial life. As long, then, as she received her share she was willing to allow trade even in neutral bottoms, if only the products did not directly enrich the coffers of her enemies; she made no attempts to prohibit trade absolutely; her chief idea was to control such trade and secure her share in the profits. Her predominance at sea was therefore used toward this end rather than toward strict blockade such as she enforced against Germany in the World War. This also explains partly how American foreign commerce grew during the whole period of the Napoleonic Wars, for as long as American ships fell in with her trade interests, England was willing to allow them to operate. Accordingly, in 1810 we find the total of American ships engaged in the foreign trade 981,019 gross tons, a figure not surpassed till 1847.

In Napoleon the young and rising American commercial sea power had a very different kind of enemy. When the emperor, having seen his last attempt against English sea power sink shattered by the onslaught of Nelson's fleet at Trafalgar, inaugurated his Continental System with the Berlin Decree of 1806, and tried to shut up England from

all profitable trade with the rest of the world, especially with the European continent, he struck a worse blow at neutrals than he did at England herself. Her commerce, which he recognized as vital to her, was largely dependent on neutral carriers, but her sea power was such as to put the neutral ship under her control, to force it to stop at her ports, and so contribute to her commercial prosperity. Since an American ship could hardly sail the Atlantic except at the pleasure of the British Navy, which meant stopping at a British port, the Berlin Decree and the later decrees made virtually all American vessels fair prey to French privateers or, according to the Milan Decree of 1807, subject to confiscation on reaching a port controlled by the emperor. Worse than that was the deliberate robbery of the American merchant marine in 1810 by the Rambouillet Decree, when, under a pretense that American ships entering a French port or a port in a French colony were there illegally according to American laws (Jefferson's Embargo and Non-Intercourse Act), Napoleon actually seized ten million dollars' worth of ships and cargoes in the ports of France, Spain, Holland, Prussia, Denmark, and Norway.

It is not necessary here to go into the Continental System itself, for with all its theory of isolating England from the trade of the world and starving her commercially, the plans of Napoleon, like England's own, were not rigid or consistent, and just as England sought to attract neutral ships to trade through her ports, so Napoleon by licenses and "certificates of origin,"—which showed that the vessel had not touched a British port,—allowed considerable trade, even the export of grain to England. And the American neutral captain went on his way successfully, furnished with two complete sets of papers by the connivance of the British authorities, one showing that he had stopped at a

British port and was thereby saved from seizure by British cruisers, and another stating that he was directly from a neutral or friendly port, which he could exhibit to prevent confiscation in the Napoleonic countries.

By one of the ironies of history, Napoleon's confiscation of American ships in the Baltic in 1810 led to his overthrow. Alexander of Russia refused to grant Napoleon's request that he seize American vessels in Russian harbors, a difference which led in 1812 to Napoleon's fatal invasion of Russia in an effort to include her in the Continental System. As Henry Adams the historian says, this was "the rock on which Napoleon's destiny split; for the quarrels which in the summer of 1811 became violent between France and the two independent Baltic Powers—Russia and Sweden—were chiefly due to those omnipresent American ships, which throve under pillage and challenged confiscation."[1]

The strongest proof, however, of the inherent vitality of American commercial sea power was given not by its reaction to the insidious regulations of the British or the brutal blows of Napoleon, but by its successful survival of the acts of its own government, acts which threatened the entire extinction of American commerce on the sea and the ruin of the country's chief basis of prosperity. This was the policy of embargo and non-intercourse which Jefferson inaugurated in 1807, just after the British Orders in Council of May, 1806, and Napoleon's counter-decree from Berlin of November. Public opinion in this country was strongly stirred against Great Britain by the *Chesapeake-Leopard* affair, when a British man-of-war fired upon an American frigate, subdued her, and took from her decks four members of her crew who were alleged to be British deserters. This made easy the enactment of Jefferson's Embargo Act,

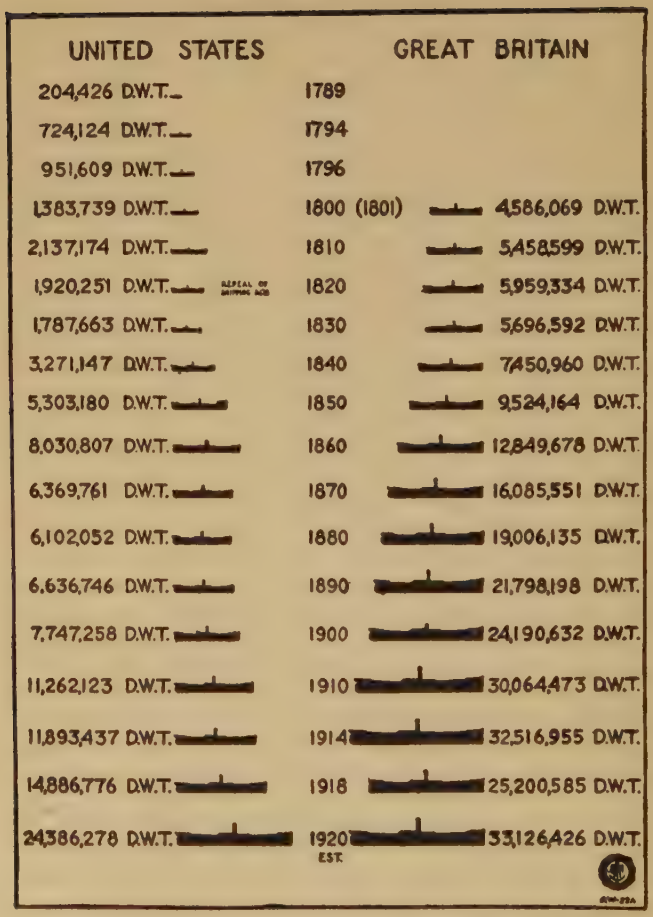
[1] Henry Adams, *History of the United States*, V, 408.

under which, from December, 1807, to March, 1809, American foreign commerce ceased to exist. No ship under any flag could sail to a foreign port, American ports were full of idle ships, American importers and exporters went into bankruptcy by the scores, and thirty thousand out of forty thousand American sailors were thrown out of employment. In New York alone the act cast twelve hundred men into prison for debt. It is no wonder that the shipping states, New England and New York, virtually defied the law, and that heavy bonds were required of every captain who sailed for a voyage between domestic ports. That the act did not forever ruin American shipping is due to the fact that American vessels in foreign waters at the passage of the act remained away from American ports and traded abroad until its repeal, and also to the fact that the British, by formal order, allowed embargo-breakers, who necessarily sailed without legal papers, to pursue their voyages unmolested.

The Non-Intercourse Act differed from its predecessor, the Embargo Act, simply in that it prohibited trade only with Great Britain, France, and their colonies, and provided that in case either nation removed the restrictions upon American trade, commercial relations might be renewed with that nation. When this also failed to effect the repeal of a single one of the British Orders or French Decrees, commerce was again made free in 1810, except that the President might forbid intercourse with either France or England in case the other country repealed its obnoxious restrictions before May 4, 1811. Owing to Napoleon's skilful manœuvering in claiming that he had repealed his decrees, Madison, when the time came, brought on non-intercourse with Great Britain, and—as she did not yield—recommended a declaration of war, which went into effect on June 19, 1812. With that act, American sea

power ceased to have commercial aspects and became purely naval. The news that on June 23d the British Government had revoked the Orders in Council did not reach the United States in time to avert the conflict.

The reasons which had induced Jefferson to recommend and Congress to adopt measures as ruinous to American shipping as the Embargo Act are clear; they are, however, as unsatisfactory and invalid as they seemed to the American merchants and sailors of the time, for against the embargo New England rose almost as one man. The idea of an embargo or non-importation or non-intercourse act was not, however, a new one, having been adopted early in the Revolutionary struggle, and non-intercourse having been defeated in 1793 only by the casting vote of the Vice-President, John Adams. But without a naval force adequate to command the respect of Great Britain's overwhelming armadas, Jefferson, naturally of a pacific temperament, saw no method of retaliating except by economic warfare. Realizing the importance of American shipping to the belligerent nations, he thought that by mere stoppage of this trade the United States could force from England and Napoleon whatever measures of relief it wished. As a matter of fact, the restrictions did not seriously embarrass either country, as many American ships remained at sea, and England especially could adapt herself by easing the Orders in Council to the entrance of other neutrals to her carrying-trade. No more than Napoleon by his Continental System, could Jefferson with his embargo stifle the operation of economic laws, or completely isolate England. Just as the German submarine blockade of the British Isles in the World War embarrassed but could not defeat England, so Jefferson harmed only his own countrymen by his ill-advised interference. The extent of British sea power, commercial as well as naval, was entirely too



THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE MERCHANT MARINE
(Report of U. S. Shipping Board, 1919, p. 59)

Gross tonnage is calculated by taking the entire closed-in cubical capacity of a ship and regarding each 100 cubic feet as a ton.

Deadweight tonnage is calculated as the weight of cargo in long tons which a cargo ship can actually carry. It is generally about fifty per cent. greater than the gross tonnage.

great to be absolutely dependent on foreign bottoms or one country's trade.

Although the extent of the American merchant fleet engaged in foreign trade decreased little in the years from 1807 to 1812, despite embargoes, Orders in Council, and Napoleonic Decrees, the year 1807 stands as the real height of the American merchant marine for the first nalf of the nineteenth century. The tonnage then was but slightly less than in 1810, when the high-water mark was reached for the years before 1847, but in 1807 the value of American foreign commerce was $246,843,150, 92.7% of which was carried in American vessels, an amount greater than American ships carried during any of the years in the rest of the half-century. Just as the years of the World War have seen a rebirth of American merchant marine in the foreign trade, so the years of the Napoleonic Wars saw develop in America a mercantile sea power which, favored as it may have been by the existence of war between great sea powers, had to surmount obstacles, imposed by the absence of an armed force to protect it and by arbitrary acts of foreign governments, which no other merchant marine, it may safely be said, has ever met and surmounted. In the annals of sea power in American history, the creation of this immense maritime force certainly deserves notice. Glorious as were the exploits of American war-ships and sailors in the War of 1812, it is well to remember that the skill, courage, aggressiveness, and enthusiasm there displayed were the fruit of a generation of peaceful but not easy achievement on every sea, in every port, and in every difficulty of the merchant mariners of America.

The impressment of seamen from American ships by the British stands in a somewhat different category from these trade restrictions. Although it began as early as 1790,

when Great Britain prepared for war with Spain, and continued till the outbreak of the War of 1812,—indeed never was settled formally, for it was not mentioned in the treaty which closed the war,—its importance is not in its effect on American commercial progress but rather as one of the chief causes of the actual outbreak of hostilities with England in 1812. Its weight in producing the explosion of war was that it contributed that human factor which is almost always necessary to bring on the actual break between two nations. Just as the interference with American commerce with Germany by England in the early years of the World War did not produce hostilities, while the sinking of the *Lusitania* and of American ships, with the consequent loss of American lives, did bring on war with Germany in 1917, so, impressment by its human factor excited popular feeling as no interference with ships or property could do. And even then the war would not have come when it did if the popular irritation against Great Britain, caused by impressment, had not been powerfully reënforced, perhaps even utilized, by Henry Clay's Western war party, which came into power in Congress. The West was anxious for war in order to safeguard the Northwest Territory from British-Indian machinations and even to conquer Canada itself for the United States.

Impressment arose directly from the needs of the British Navy in wartime. When, at the outbreak of a war such as her war with France in 1793, she tried to fill the complements of her naval vessels, she used the press-gang as her regular instrument. This meant sending out parties to go the rounds of the sailors' resorts in all the ports and seize Englishmen who were already trained seamen. At the same time British merchant ships entering port were boarded and their best seamen taken for the naval service. As the British pointed out, it was very difficult to dis-

tinguish a native-born American from a Britisher, and mistakes would necessarily be made. This difficulty would probably have been easily surmounted, however, if two other factors had not entered into the problem. One was the circumstance that in wartime neutral vessels would pay higher wages than British skippers, and by the increase in their opportunities would thus attract many a British seaman. If this neutral happened to be an American ship, as was usually the case, the British sailor could obtain additional protection from forced service in the British ships-of-war under cruel discipline and miserable wages, if at his first American port he took out naturalization papers and thus declared himself an American citizen. But, as the right to expatriate oneself—especially in time of war—was not recognized by the British authorities, and could not be if the navy was to be efficiently manned, this naturalization at once became the cause of disagreement and dispute between the two countries. It was not surprising, therefore, that we find British cruisers lying in wait off American ports such as New York and overhauling every American ship that came out. Only in that fashion could the fleets of Howe, Jervis, Hood, Nelson, and Collingwood ever be supplied with fighting personnel.

In the second place, the man so impressed into the British Navy either in the British port or from the deck of an American ship often deserted in the first American port he could reach, for there he could not be rearrested and could obtain naturalization papers that ought to protect him from punishment the next time he went to sea. Of course, the British Government, supreme at sea as it was, could not endure such a transparent flouting of its authority, and it is not surprising that in 1807 when the British had been informed that deserters from their ships of war were actually enrolled in the crew of the American

frigate *Chesapeake,* they decided to board even American men-of-war to reclaim their lost seamen. Accordingly, when the *Chesapeake* left Norfolk and headed for the Mediterranean, the British 50-gun ship *Leopard* hailed her, demanded the deserters, and when the demand was refused, fired upon the American until she surrendered and allowed the British to take four men. As a matter of fact, only one of the four taken was a deserter; the other three sought for had deserted the *Chesapeake* before she sailed. This humiliating of the American flag stirred the country to indignation and enabled Jefferson to carry through the Embargo Act in retaliation. It is difficult to discover just how many really native-born Americans suffered impressment, though there is a tradition that Nelson's barge crew at Trafalgar was composed of American sailors. But the number of British-born sailors with American naturalization papers must have been very great, and the embarrassments and suffering inflicted on the American merchant marine were exasperating and hard to bear. Nevertheless, the people of the shipping states did not wish to fight for "Free Trade and Sailors' Rights," as the slogan went in 1812, for war would destroy, not secure, the profitable commerce which had made them prosperous for so many years. They were, however, in favor of increasing the navy to a point where the worst injuries of British sea power might be countered, but curiously enough, the Western War Democrats, hot for the conquest of Canada, were opposed to enlarging the navy, and the only considerable increase to the navy were the two hundred and fifty open gunboats of Jefferson, which, though intended to defend American harbors with their one gun per ship, were about as useful against a British cruiser or 74 as an Indian canoe.

CHAPTER V

AMERICAN NAVAL POWER REBORN

THE commercial fleets of the United States were conspicuous in the eyes of Europe and the rest of the world during all the years of the neutrality of the United States in the great war in Europe. But the naval forces of the new nation were so insignificant in comparison that though they brilliantly redeemed every opportunity for action they filled but a small place in the thought of the nation. In truth, for ten long years the United States actually had no navy. In 1785 the three ships remaining of the Revolutionary navy were sold, and for a decade the United States possessed not a single armed national vessel. These ten years were an open invitation to piracy, not only in the West Indies but also in the Mediterranean. In the very year 1785 Barbary pirates began their depredations on the young, growing, unprotected trade of America. It was as if police protection had suddenly been withdrawn from some great mart, leaving the shops with their costly wares exposed to robbers, who could henceforth ply their trade in daylight. By 1793 Algiers alone had taken thirteen American merchantmen and held their crews for ransom until some of them died in captivity. A democratic people that looked upon armaments in peace times as instruments of tyranny was forced to arm, and on March 27, 1794, the United States Navy was reborn, never, let us hope, however near it may at times approach zero, again to reach that limit.

To meet the threat of piracy, by the law of March 27, 1794, a date memorable in American naval annals, Congress made provision for the building of six frigates, for the commissioning of six captains and twenty-two lieutenants, and for the training of two thousand sailors and marines. But the law had the proviso—characteristic of a pacific and over-confident young democracy—that if peace were made with Algiers, work on the six frigates was to cease. In imitation of the methods of European nations in dealing with the Barbary states, the United States bought a treaty of peace from Algiers, a method that is prolific of future trouble; the buying of immunity from a bandit gives other bandits a contempt for the purchaser and stirs up their cupidity to make similar demands on every traveler. Congress, however, under the wise guidance of Washington, so far modified its earlier decision as to make possible the launching of at least three of the six frigates. Moreover, the President had commissioned as captains in the navy, in accordance with the law of March 27th, John Barry, Samuel Nicholson, Silas Talbot, Joshua Barney, Richard Dale, and Thomas Truxtun. One of these, Talbot, had been an army officer in the Revolution, a circumstance rather galling to real sea dogs like Barney, who, therefore, refused to accept a commission which would make him the former's junior. But in mitigation of such offensive intrusion of army officers, we must remember that the navy was reborn under the War Department,—there was as yet no Navy Department,—hence the navy owes a bit of gratitude to the army, its foster-mother at a time when no one cared to acknowledge the poor little waif.

To make the plans and supervise the construction of these six frigates, Joshua Humphreys was selected, a naval constructor who builded better even than he knew, for some of these famous six, in our days of great steel super-

dreadnaughts scrapped after a score of years, are still afloat to tell the tale of the bygone glory of the sail. Humphreys carried out his ideal, which was to create frigates with finer lines, heavier timbers, taller masts, greater spread of sail, and heavier armament,—in a word, with greater power and speed,—than any ships of that class afloat. As he explained in one of his reports, he intended to build cruisers so that their commanders "will have it in their power to engage, or not, any ship, as they may think proper; and no ship, under sixty-four, now afloat, but what must submit to them." They were to be built of live-oak, and red cedar, estimated at five times the durability of white oak, and to have 24-pounder guns instead of the usual 18-pounders. The frigates were of two sizes, rated according to gun power as 44's or 36's, but this rating was merely for classification. They always carried more guns than their ratings; the enterprising captains of these first six cruisers, who themselves had a hand in supervising their construction, were limited only by the size of the gun-decks and the unwieldiness of the early types of guns and carriages. The policy of our government was opposed to building ships of the line, so called because they were intended for the line of battle, the dreadnaughts of the day, the type with which Nelson fought his great battles. Humphreys' creations were frigates,—that is, cruisers intended for convoy and scout work, for commerce-raiding and commerce-protection, units that could overmatch anything of their class, and run from the big unwieldy ships of the line, and so live to fight another day.

Of these six frigates, the first three, the *United States,* the *Constitution,* and the *Constellation,* were launched in 1797. As a result of the threatening state of affairs with France [1] they were equipped and commissioned, and Con-

[1] See above, p. 56.

gress appropriated the money for completing the other three. Washington kept urging his Congress to prepare, and the new President, Adams, in a last hope for isolation while still extending the hand of friendship to the French Republicans, urged his new Congress to prepare for war. While waiting for the Directory's reply to the Pinckney Mission, Congress passed still stricter laws to maintain neutrality. When in those days of slow communications, the insolent answer of the Directory finally arrived, Congress, in the summer of 1798, acted with unusual vigor and passed in quick succession a score of defensive acts. Among other things, it created the Navy Department, provided—in addition to the six frigates above mentioned—for the purchase or building of twenty-four smaller war-ships, and for the arming of American merchantmen; moveover, it empowered the President, without a formal declaration of war, to capture French armed ships, and it repealed all existing treaties with France. These measures gave the President the power to begin a strange war,—a war in which there was never a declaration, in which both sides disavowed hostile intentions. The Directory, with all its intrigue and insolence to our ambassadors, when it came to the test, was afraid that war with a country that had been so friendly to France would throw that country into the arms of its worst enemy, England. In accordance with the enactments of Congress, Adams appointed Benjamin Stoddert the first Secretary of the Navy. Stoddert proved to be a wise and far-seeing cabinet officer, whose suggestions, if they had been carried out, would probably have prevented the War of 1812.[1] The new Navy Department took over the completing of the frigates, the purchase of the twenty-four minor war-vessels, the

[1] Allen, *Our Naval War with France*, pp. 54, 55. See also Mahan, *Sea Power in Its Relations to the War of 1812*, I. 296.

enlistment and training of the personnel, and the arming of three hundred and sixty-five merchantmen. President Adams also recalled from retirement George Washington to act as Commander-in-Chief of the new army. This army, however, was never mobilized, because the new-born navy finished the job before there was any need of an army. It is a strange illustration of sea power that the decisive military factor in bringing both the powerful revolutionary France and the petty Barbary states to terms was not an army, but the small naval armament, created in 1794–98, the nucleus of which consisted of the six frigates: *United States, Constitution, Constellation, President, Congress,* and *Chesapeake.* When the first of this little squadron made its appearance in the West Indies, it became an object of hilarious ridicule in the ward-rooms of British and French men-of-war on the station, a ridicule which some of this sextet were destined to change to profound respect. These frigates brought about a revolution in construction and armament in foreign navies, just as the 74-gun ship of the line did after Trafalgar, or as the *Monitor* blazed the way for the modern battle-ship.

The ships of the new navy quickly got to sea. The French privateers operated mostly in the West Indies, though they at times had been so bold as to carry on their depredations close to shore along the Atlantic seaboard. Accordingly, the small United States fleet, divided in three squadrons, each assigned to a definite cruising ground, concentrated on the protection of the West Indian trade. These squadrons kept up an active patrol against French cruisers and acted as convoys for merchantmen to and from the islands.

The chief officer in command of any of these squadrons to distinguish himself was Captain Truxtun, who in the *Constellation* defeated near St. Kitts the French frigate

Insurgente, February 9, 1799. In this duel, which lasted more than an hour, the *Constellation* proved a far better sailer than "this celebrated French frigate *Insurgente,* esteemed one of the fastest sailing ships in the French Navy."[1] The *Constellation* secured during the manœuvering two positions from which she raked the Frenchman so effectively that he was forced to strike his colors. In accuracy of fire, too, the new American frigate surpassed an enemy that had had much longer experience at the guns. During the action the quick wit of Midshipman David Porter saved the *Constellation* from disaster, for by cutting the slings and lowering the yard from the wounded foretopmast, he prevented the pressure of the wind from carrying away the mast. As the French captain, Barreaut, came aboard the *Constellation* and handed his sword to Truxtun, he exclaimed: "Why have you fired on the national flag? Our two nations are at peace." Truxtun merely looked at him and replied, "You are my prisoner." He knew, and Barreaut knew, that the American Navy had gotten one of the most flagrant offenders against American merchantmen.

There was a sort of poetic justice in Truxtun's victory, for the *Insurgente* had the previous year retaken the *Retaliation,* which, under its original French name *Croyable,* Stephen Decatur, Sr., famous father of a more famous son, had caught early in the war in piratical acts off the American coast. William Bainbridge, the unlucky commander of the *Retaliation* at the time of her recapture by the *Insurgente,* was now, and was to remain many months, in the dungeons of Guadeloupe. Truxtun's victory was therefore hailed by the American people as a sharp revenge for old scores.

[1] Truxtun's report of the battle. See Barreaut's interesting report, Maclay, *History of the Navy,* I. 183 ff.

Truxtun's victory was followed early the next year by an indecisive engagement between the *Constellation* and another frigate, the *Vengeance,* but the American squadrons had by this time greatly decreased French depredations on commerce. With the capture of the French *Berceau* by the *Boston,* the bold exploit of Isaac Hull in cutting out a privateer in the harbor of Puerto Plata, and the work of the smaller American cruisers against privateers, the steady pressure of American sea power in the West Indies was bringing the French people to terms. France, powerful in her desperation, like Russia after the World War, had in a mad orgy of blood at once been killing her own citizens and facing a hostile world. After ten years of radicalism, she fell into the power of a great military dictator, Napoleon, who had superseded the Directory and who, on September 30, 1800, made peace with the United States. By the terms of the treaty, France recovered the captured warships but lost seventy privateers taken by the American naval forces.

The treaty with France was hardly ratified before the Barbary states began to make new demands for more tribute. These North African peoples had since ancient times fostered piracy. Especially after the conquest of Granada in 1492, when the Moriscos left Spain, religious hate added fuel to commercial rivalry and brought on continual wars of all sea powers in succession against the Barbary states,—wars that were to be terminated once for all by a new sea power across the Atlantic. Spain, England, Holland, and France, under such great leaders as Charles V, Cromwell, De Ruyter, and Duquesne, had sent huge fleets to attack the pirate nests, had made treaties only to have them broken when vigilance was relaxed, and had ended by buying immunity from the corsairs with ransom and tribute and blackmail. The United States,

following the lead of these great European powers, likewise found it expedient for a time to buy such immunity and had accordingly made treaties with Morocco (1785), Algiers (1795), Tripoli (1796), and Tunis (1797). The gist of all these treaties was tribute. During the great European war, raging for the last decade of the eighteenth century, and yet to rage for another decade, the belligerents swept one another's trade off the Mediterranean, and American enterprise was active in this sea to supply the deficiency. The Barbary states, taking advantage of the general disorder of civilization, became more extortionate toward any possible victims. The larger European nations in their own selfish interests, now as in earlier times, connived at these depredations on the commerce of a rival, or bought their own immunity by winking at piracy against others. Indeed, this century-old extortion by bandits was largely fostered by the mutual jealousies and lack of cooperation of the Christian powers. William Eaton, fire-eating ex-Revolutionary American soldier, who was sent with the tribute of naval stores to Algiers in 1797, summarizes the whole Barbary business in these vivid words, descriptive of his audience with the Dey of Algiers:

> Here [in the palace] we took off our shoes and, entering the cave (for so it seemed), with small apertures of light from iron grates, we were shown to a huge, shaggy beast, sitting on his rump upon a low bench, covered with a cushion of embroidered velvet, with his hind legs gathered up like a bear. On our approach to him, he reached out his forepaw, as if to receive something to eat. Our guide exclaimed, "Kiss the Dey's hand!" The consul general bowed very elegantly and kissed it; and we followed his example. . . . Can any man believe that this elevated brute has seven kings of Europe, two republics, and a continent tributary to him, when his whole naval force is not equal to two line-of-battle ships? It is so![1]

[1] Allen, *Our Navy and the Barbary Corsairs*, p. 63.

And the worst of this whole system of tribute was that the pirate lust for money was insatiable. A new treaty granting more gifts to one Barbary state aroused immediately the cupidity of another. Such America found to be the case now. She had given more to Algiers and Tunis than to Tripoli. The latter, therefore, declared war upon the United States, February, 1801.

But before going on with this war with Tripoli, we must pause to tell of an incident that occurred the previous year, an incident that would be highly amusing if it were not one of the most humiliating events in the annals of the American Navy. William Bainbridge, after his long imprisonment at Guadeloupe, at the age of twenty-six years was promoted to a captaincy in the navy and was given command of the *George Washington*, of twenty-four guns, one of the ships purchased by the Government during the "French War." In this he carried the annual tribute to Algiers in the autumn of 1800. The Dey [1] of Algiers was at this time having trouble with his suzerain, the Sultan of Turkey, because the dey had made peace with Napoleon without consulting the sultan. The dey accordingly ordered Bainbridge to carry gifts as a solace to his sultanic majesty. Bainbridge, who had shown in his career up to this time great spirit, refused point-blank. The dey answered that he had been accustomed to receive similar services from the great nations of Europe and could easily get a British ship to carry his gifts, and added: "You pay me tribute by which you become my slaves. I have therefore a right to order you as I think proper." The *George Washington* was anchored right under the Algerian guns and a persistence in refusal probably meant deten-

[1] The North African rulers were known by a variety of names, such as dey, bey, bashaw, pasha, sultan, and even emperor, as in the case of Morocco.

tion of the ship, imprisonment and slavery for the crew, and war between the United States and Algiers. This was the reasoning of the American consul-general, O'Brien, at Algiers, who advised Bainbridge to acquiesce in the dey's demand. An experience of ten years of slavery in Barbary may have had some influence on O'Brien's decision, which called down upon him and Bainbridge the bitter denunciation of Eaton. Bainbridge, under coercion and deeply humiliated, took the dey's mission to the sultan. Besides his own crew of one hundred and thirty, he had on board "the ambassador, and suite, one hundred in number; also one hundred negro women and children, one hundred and fifty sheep, twenty-five cattle, four lions, four tigers, four antelopes, twelve parrots, and funds and regalia amounting to nearly a million dollars." The United States Navy during the last century has had varied experiences ranging all the way from great fights to Arctic explorations and relief to earthquake-shattered towns and starving peoples, but Bainbridge's expedition in 1800 stands in a class by itself.

The Tripolitan War, 1801–5, is a period in history in which Americans can find small cause for pride except in this remarkable fact that the insignificant naval armament of a new nation three thousand miles from its base accomplished, largely as a result of this war, what the great sea powers of Europe had not been able to accomplish in three hundred years,—the ending of all tribute forever to the Barbary states. The main reason that the war with Tripoli was spread out over five years was that the American Navy was handicapped by government red-tape, interdepartmental friction, and by a system of annual enlistments, owing to which American squadrons had to return to the United States every year. Of the five squadrons so sent out, under Commodores Dale, Morris, Preble, Samuel

Barron, and Rodgers respectively, the third and smallest, under Preble, was the most decisive factor and presents the most illuminating lessons for our consideration. Preble was recalled a little bit too soon to finish the job because an officer senior to him had by departmental rules a prior claim to his command, but Preble's splendid work was destined to have a decisive effect on the treaty negotiations.

Preble took command in the summer of 1803, and after extensive repairs to his flag-ship, the *Constitution,* in Boston, he sailed in August, with the new consul-general to the Barbary states, Tobias Lear, aboard, for Gibraltar. Preble's squadron, the units of which had sailed singly as each was ready for sea, consisted of the frigates *Constitution* and *Philadelphia,* the brigs *Argus* and *Siren,* and the schooners *Vixen, Nautilus,* and *Enterprise.* Preble, like his two predecessors, was a veteran of the Revolution. A stern disciplinarian and hot-tempered, he was at first very unpopular with his subordinates, whom, on account of their youthfulness, he sarcastically called school-boys. But under his brusque manner Preble had a big heart and an intense spirit of justice, qualities which, coupled with his energy and decision of character in dealing with the corsairs, quickly inspired in his "boys" a warm admiration, which became mutual. Under Preble the squadron achieved a very high degree of efficiency, and officers and men showed a devotion to service and country that has few parallels in history.

On his arrival at Gibraltar, Preble found plenty to occupy his energetic spirit. He met, at the straits, bound for home, Commodore John Rodgers, who had during the summer captured the *Meshuda,* a Tripolitan corsair claimed under a fictitious sale by the Emperor of Morocco. Captain Bainbridge in the *Philadelphia,* en route to his

station, caught red-handed another Moroccan cruiser, the *Mirboka,* which in contravention of the treaty had just captured an American merchantman, the *Celia.* With Morocco thus committing depredations at the very entrance to the Mediterranean, Preble realized that operations at Tripoli must be secondary to this new menace.

He persuaded Commodore Rodgers, with the latter's homeward-bound squadron consisting of the *New York* and the *John Adams,* to join him in a determined naval demonstration before Tangier. This quick action of Preble and Rodgers brought quick returns. The Emperor of Morocco, after pretending that he had not authorized his subordinate to capture American merchantmen, and after feigning anger at the seizure of the *Meshuda,* confirmed anew the treaty of 1785 and gave up all prisoners without ransom. Preble's conduct in this matter was a revelation to the young officers in the fleet; they saw the dawn of a new day in a campaign that had lagged until the boldest were losing heart.

Meanwhile Bainbridge had preceded Preble to his duty, the Tripolitan blockade, which had been proclaimed to the world by Consul Eaton during the second year of the war. Now happened a third misfortune to Bainbridge, which with its cumulative force would have broken a less resolute heart. The whole coast of Barbary is unusually dangerous for blockade duty, especially from September to April, when there are frequent and violent gales. Besides these storms, Tripoli in particular has many reefs, uncharted in those days, and dangerous even for the best Mediterranean pilots. On October 31, 1803, Bainbridge in the *Philadelphia,* noticing a strange sail standing before the wind toward the harbor, gave chase, firing at her as he drew nearer. The vessel, which displayed Tripolitan colors, ran close in shore. Bainbridge, finding his fire in-

effectual, gave up the chase and was bearing off shore when the *Philadelphia* suddenly ran aground in twelve feet of water. Bainbridge immediately took careful soundings, and finding plenty of water astern, "laid all sails aback and set a heavy press of sail in the ship to blow her off; cast three anchors away from the bows, started the water in the hold, hove overboard the guns excepting some abaft to defend the ship against the gunboats then firing on us. I found all this ineffectual. I then made the last resort of lightening her forward by cutting away the foremast. But labor and enterprise were in vain, for our fate was direfully fixed."[1] Without means of defense and surrounded by gunboats, Bainbridge submitted to capture, and three hundred and seven officers and men were doomed to a long imprisonment. The officers were treated fairly well, but the men were ill fed, abused, and driven by the lash and torture to labor like slaves. The Danish consul, Nissen, did much to alleviate conditions for the prisoners. Through his unremitting efforts, Bainbridge was able to obtain money and supplies from the squadron and carry on a correspondence in code with Preble, which was of much service to the commodore in conducting the blockade of Tripoli. A few days after the accident the Tripolitans succeeded in dragging the *Philadelphia* off the reef, salvaged the anchors and guns, and towed her into the harbor amidst a jubilation whose echoes were heard by the mortified American prisoners. The court of inquiry that followed entirely exonerated Bainbridge, but he felt the loss terribly.

And Preble, who had first learned of the accident a month later from the *Amazon*, one of Nelson's cruisers, also felt the loss terribly, though he wrote letters full of heartfelt sympathy to Bainbridge in an effort to cheer him

[1] Bainbridge's report to the Secretary of the Navy, Nov. 1, 1803.

and his men. Without the *Philadelphia* Preble's squadron, small from the start, lost one third of its force. Despite the handicap, however, Preble made all plans for a vigorous offensive. He kept the smaller units of his squadron busy convoying American merchantmen and as scouts watching with vigilant eye the movements of all Mediterranean corsairs. He was also in constant communication with the various United States consuls in the Barbary states. As Gibraltar was at this time too much occupied with Nelson's fleet, Preble changed the base of his squadron to Malta and Syracuse, where he cultivated friendly relations with the authorities. During these interesting times in the Mediterranean, when Nelson was bringing to a climax a splendid career by his relentless vigil for two years before Toulon in the memorable campaign that ended with Trafalgar, Preble came in contact with that greatest sailor of all times. Nelson had intervened to make desertions from the American to the British naval forces less possible, and Sir Alexander Ball, friend of Nelson and Governor of Malta, and also the King of Naples, another friend of the great British admiral, lent much assistance to Preble from time to time. This contact of the young American Navy with a service which at that time was creating the greatest tradition in all sea annals must have had a marked influence upon Preble and his boys, who were also making an immortal memory for themselves. Unwittingly, long before the days of naval academies, Preble was conducting a very practical naval school, with harsh experiences as preceptor and illustrious examples as inspiration.

It was well that the youthful American Navy, like the American people, drew for its traditions upon England, autocratic in form and democratic in spirit, rather than upon France, republican in appearance, but reactionary

and autocratic in essence. The Americans, co-heirs with England of the same language, the same Shakspere, the same common law, and the same fundamentals of constitutional liberty and government, chose, through Congressional enactment during the "French War," the Regulations of the British Navy as basic law of their new navy. The two navies, therefore, like the two great English-speaking peoples, sprang by tradition and legal sanctions from the same sources.

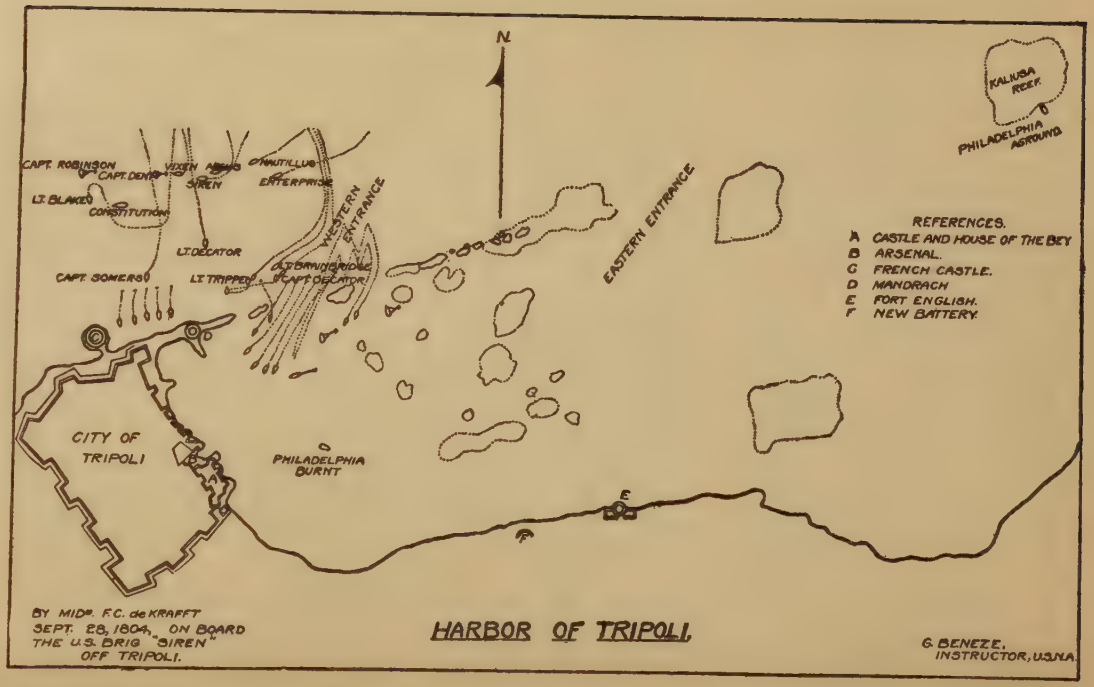
Almost immediately after the loss of the *Philadelphia,* the strenuous Preble made plans to neutralize the handicap of his small force by aggressive measures in midwinter. Bainbridge, also, was using his time in prison not only in conducting an improvised naval school for his fellow officers, but also in devising plans for the cutting out of the *Philadelphia* and for the gunboat attacks on Tripoli,—plans which he communicated secretly to Preble. But Preble and his young fellows out in the squadron were likewise devising means of cutting out or destroying the frigate. Foremost among these venturesome spirits was Stephen Decatur, who had volunteered to make a night attack in midwinter on the *Philadelphia.* The *Enterprise* on a cruise recently with the *Constitution* had captured a Turkish ketch, the *Mastico,* running the blockade. She had formerly been a French gunboat and had taken part in the attack on the grounded and helpless frigate. This Mediterranean-rigged ketch, which Preble renamed *Intrepid* and added to his force, was to take part in another attack on the *Philadelphia.* Preble and Decatur were perfecting, at Syracuse toward the end of January, the most careful plans for a feat that takes rank with Nelson's bold exploit at Corsica, with Cushing's destruction of the *Albemarle,* and with Carpenter's blocking of the channel at Zeebrugge in the World War.

According to these plans, early in February, 1804, Decatur, accompanied by Stewart in the *Siren,* crossed to Tripoli, but was prevented by heavy gales from entering the harbor. After tossing about for ten days in the close and uncomfortable quarters of the ketch, Decatur was again making for the entrance of the harbor on February 16th. A faint moon helped him thread his way in, but also made him visible from shore. With drags out to slacken her speed the *Intrepid* stood slowly for the *Philadelphia.* When she had gotten within thirty yards of the frigate, she was hailed and ordered to keep off. Catalano, Decatur's resourceful Sicilian pilot, who knew the language, answered the hail, and, coached by Decatur at his side, kept up an easy fire of replies to the numerous questions hurled at him from the deck of the frigate. He explained that the ketch had lost her anchors in the gale off shore and requested permission to lie alongside for the night; that they were in bad straits for water and food; that the brig outside (the *Siren*) was the *Transfer,* recently bought by the Tripolitans at Malta and now waiting to make her way into the harbor. During this conversation, the dozen American sailors, disguised in Maltese costume, the sole ones visible on deck, were quietly but very efficiently making lines fast to the bow and stern of the *Philadelphia,* while hidden forces below were pulling in the hawsers and working the ketch alongside. Suddenly a suspicion ran through the crowd overhead and some one yelled "Americanos!" Decatur, giving the word to board, with Morris sprang on the *Philadelphia's* deck. For a brief instant they were alone, but only for an instant. The Americans swarmed over the sides and found the Tripolitans huddled together, utterly dazed, in the forecastle. The struggle was short and decisive. "Those who resisted were cut down and the rest jumped overboard pre-

cipitately."[1] The boarders, according to details very carefully prearranged, separated; some swept the gun-deck while others, laden with combustibles, started fires in various parts of the ship. The whole thing went like clockwork and was over in a few minutes,—minutes during which Stephen Decatur was in command of that fine frigate, whose first commander, as she left the ways, had been his father, Stephen Decatur senior. The job done, the Americans scrambled back to the *Intrepid's* deck. Decatur, the last to leave, sprang into the rigging of the ketch as she shoved off.

But the Americans were none too soon. They now got a rousing send-off. As the sailors manned the sweeps to help the light breeze in getting them away from these warm surroundings, they gave three cheers,—cheers that were quickly drowned by the belching of a hundred and more cannon of the forts, which had just awakened from surprised stupor. Three Tripolitan cruisers and a few galleys, moored near the *Philadelphia,* also fired at the retreating ketch, but their aim was wild and the ketch received a hole in one sail as the sole token of the pirates' rage. The *Philadelphia,* with ports brightly illuminated from the intense fire within, the flames licking with great tongues the tall masts and spars, lighted the harbor and town. The fast-falling shot cast up jets of fire-lit spray and the tall minarets of the town sent back a weird reflection. The *Philadelphia,* as her loaded guns became heated, gave the Tripolitans a broadside and fired a last salute for her retreating countrymen. Her hawsers burnt off, she drifted on shore near the dey's palace, where she blew up. For this daring piece of work Decatur became the popular idol of the American people, was promoted to the rank of captain at twenty-five, the youngest man ever

[1] Soley, *Operations under Preble,* U. S. Naval Institute, V. 67.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KALIUSA REEF
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LT. DECATOR
CAPT. SOMERS
LT. TRIPPE
LT. BAINBRIDGE
CAPT. DECATOR
EASTERN ENTRANCE
REFERENCES.
A CASTLE AND HOUSE OF THE BEY
B ARSENAL.
C FRENCH CASTLE.
D MANDRACH
E FORT ENGLISH.
F NEW BATTERY.
CITY OF TRIPOLI
PHILADELPHIA BURNT
E
F
BY MIDN. F.C. de KRAFFT
SEPT. 28, 1804, ON BOARD
THE U.S. BRIG "SIREN"
OFF TRIPOLI.
HARBOR OF TRIPOLI.
G. BENEZE.
INSTRUCTOR, U.S.N.A.

to receive such rank. The venture quickly got to the ears of Nelson off Toulon, who called it "the most bold and daring act of the age."

After the destruction of the *Philadelphia* Preble made his plans for the following summer. In May he secured from the King of Naples, who was also at war with Tripoli, a friendly loan of six 25-ton gunboats, two 30-ton mortar-boats, and twelve Neapolitan gunners for each of these eight vessels. The gunboats were flat-bottomed, unwieldly affairs, intended for harbor defense, mounted one 24-pounder in the bow, and carried a complement of thirty-five men. The loan of twelve gunners for each vessel helped Preble greatly, for his squadron was short-handed. While equipping these boats at Syracuse and making his plans for the bombardment of Tripoli, he kept a vessel or two always off Tripoli on blockade duty and he himself was constantly on the move between Malta, Syracuse, Tripoli, Naples, and Tunis. As at this latter place the bey was showing a hostile attitude, Preble appeared in force before the town in June and brought the bey back to the strait and narrow path of treaty obligations. By July 25th, Preble arrived, gunboats and all, before Tripoli, and from now until his relief, September 10th, he kept up a harassing offensive. During this time he made five carefully planned attacks on the defenses, in the course of which he sent some thousands of shells into the towns and forts, destroyed half a dozen of their gunboats, and reduced the demands of the pasha for ransom from half a million to a hundred thousand dollars. By departmental red-tape Preble was recalled at the very moment when he was forcing the pasha to his knees.

Of these five bombardments we will dwell for a moment upon the first and most interesting. The larger units of Preble's squadron on all of these occasions had to remain

a safe distance from the treacherous reefs, and also were hampered by northerly gales. The enemy gunboats, numbering three times as many as Preble's, generally kept behind the long line of reefs, but on August 3d the eastern or van division ventured outside the rocks. On this day the enemy's center division, of seven boats, lay behind the reefs and the rear, of five, under the western batteries. Preble, thinking it a favorable opportunity, gave the order to his gunboats to cast loose, and began a bombardment from the heavier ships to cover the attack. Somers, in command of the first division, in a poor sailer, was driven too far to leeward, where he encountered the enemy's rear single-handed, and inflicted severe losses in driving them shoreward. Captain Stephen Decatur, with that dash so characteristic of him, captured an enemy gunboat by boarding. Lieutenant James Decatur, his brother, had also just made a capture but was treacherously shot at the moment of boarding the prize. Maddened by this, Captain Decatur left his first prize and boarded another corsair. In the ensuing encounter Decatur fought with such fury that he outstripped the corsairs in a manner of fighting in which they were masters, but at the imminent risk of his life. In his two hand-to-hand encounters Decatur and his crew of thirty had slain thirty-three out of sixty and made the rest prisoners. Lieutenant Trippe in Gunboat Number 6, of Decatur's division, boarded an enemy with ten men, but before the rest could get aboard, his vessel drifted away, leaving the eleven alone against thirty-six. With the fury of madness these plucky eleven killed fourteen of the enemy, received the surrender of the remaining twenty-two, and sailed back in their prize. Trippe came out of this action with eleven saber wounds. Surely these "boys" could fight a bit!

The daredevil spirit that actuated these young officers

is perhaps best illustrated by an incident of the blockade of Tripoli, known as the Intrepid Disaster. After his numerous bombardments Preble on the fourth of September tried to force a decision on the pasha by sending a fire-ship into the inner harbor. He found eager volunteers again for this dangerous undertaking and chose Lieutenants Richard Somers, Henry Wadsworth, and Joseph Israel, to command the *Intrepid*. She had on board a hundred barrels of gunpowder and a fuse timed to burn fifteen minutes. Her officers intended to take her into the midst of the enemy gunboats, light the fuse, and get back in a cutter. She entered the harbor on a dark night and must have gotten very near her objective when she blew up prematurely. Her consorts waited many hours outside for the lads' return but no survivors ever appeared. The *Intrepid's* fate to this day is a matter of conjecture. It was known that Somers had vowed not to be taken alive, and it is generally supposed that he, surrounded by overwhelming odds, deliberately blew up himself and his enemies. Thirteen bodies drifted ashore next day, but they were so disfigured that they could not be recognized by Bainbridge, who was taken to see them.

A week after this incident Commodore Barron arrived and took command. But Barron, a sick man, was in turn relieved the following spring by Commodore John Rodgers, who had an overwhelming force, the nucleus of which was six frigates. Meanwhile the indefatigable and patriotic Consul Eaton, bitter critic of earlier naval fiascos, had gone to the United States to get authority to back Hamet, an elder brother of the pasha, in the former's claim for the throne. With an energy that matched Preble's, Eaton gathered a motley Falstaffian army in Egypt, captured Derne, a town of Tripoli, and was marching on Tripoli from the rear, when peace was suddenly made by a bitter

enemy of Eaton, Consul-General Lear, on June 3, 1805. By the terms of this treaty the Americans paid sixty thousand dollars ransom, and Bainbridge and his men were at once released. But the decisive factor in this result was the little squadron under Preble.[1] Ten years later Decatur in command of a big force again entered the Mediterranean and ended by quick and decisive action all tribute-paying by the American Government to these pirate states forever. The next year, 1816, England, the mistress of the seas, that had submitted to the insolence and extortion of Barbary for two and a half centuries, sent a powerful fleet under Lord Exmouth and forced Algiers to end white slavery and tribute. The rest of Europe soon followed suit, but Preble and his boys had blazed the trail.

The officers who were with Preble and Decatur in the year 1803–4 include the whole list, except Perry alone, of those who were to win fame in the coming War of 1812. In Preble's squadron were Macdonough, Hull, Lawrence, the elder and the younger Bainbridge, Stewart, Blakeley, Chauncey, Charles Morris, David Porter, Jacob Jones, and Biddle,—a famous company, whose names loom large in the traditions of the American Navy.

We have now seen that the sea power of America, reborn in 1794 with the first six frigates, stopped the depredations of France and Barbary upon America's commerce, which constituted at this time a great element of sea power. The American naval armament, which in 1801 comprised some forty-five war-ships and six thousand officers and men, was estimated to have cost the country about $6,000,000 during the "French War." This force protected a commerce valued at $200,000,000. After the "French War" the navy kept growing to protect against the Bar-

[1] MacKenzie, *Life of Decatur*, p. 127. Soley, *Operations Under Preble*, U. S. Naval Institute, V. 80.

bary pirates a commerce which at the end of the Tripolitan War amounted to $250,000,000 annually. A navy so founded on a thriving commerce and in proper ratio to such commerce is not an instrument of tyranny but rather a bulwark of liberty to a great and free people.

CHAPTER VI

SEA POWER DOMINATES THE WAR OF 1812

WE have seen that during the great upheaval in Europe—an upheaval which was to cover in all a quarter of a century—the United States had already been drawn into two wars, one of which was a maritime contest with one of the two great belligerents, France; the other of these two belligerents, England, was now, on the same issue of freedom of the seas, to draw the United States into war a second time. We have seen that in the European war, during the decade after the "French War," both European belligerents, by act after act of reprisal which in turn produced further restrictions, ruthlessly and effectively made neutral commerce more and more difficult. As in 1914 to 1917, England with her mighty sea power—her navalism, as her opponents called it—was engaged in a death-grapple with militarism, a yet more ruthless power lusting for world conquest. In this contest peace-loving, isolation-loving America, after ten years of patience and note-writing, was finally again forced to take sides. Blinded by the old slogans of the War of Independence,—navigation acts and a tyranny that threatened again to reduce the new country to the status of colonial dependence,—the American people fought England rather than their traditional friend, France. Blinded, too, the Americans were by the clever phrases of that wonderful man Napoleon, who posed as the great opponent of autocracy, and who, while reducing to poverty

millions of people in Europe by stealing private property on land, pretended to the most scrupulous regard for private property at sea. Despite the fact that America in 1812 chose as a virtual ally one whom she should have chosen as an enemy, the vast sea power of Britain dominated the world in 1812 as it did a century later. And well it was for America that Britain's sea power did dominate the world, for taken all in all, Britain, against the radicalism and militarism of France, was the bulwark of the world's liberty.[1]

Napoleon's weapon on the sea, after Trafalgar in 1805, was the Continental System, a vast scheme to destroy the life-blood of British sea power, her commerce upon the seas, by shutting it out from the whole of Europe. This Continental System, whose mere enforcement, ranging from the Baltic to the Atlantic and Mediterranean, was an enormous drain on Napoleon's resources, wasted his revenues, his credits, and his enforced contributions from subject peoples, and gave him in their stead the hatred of these peoples. At the same time British trade, despite the system, continued to flourish and powerfully sustained the revenues of Britain, giving her the ready money for war-making by which she kept alive and vigorous those successive coalitions against the despot of Europe. The Continental System, intended to break Britain, broke its creator, Napoleon. For, to enforce his vast system, he, the great apostle of concentration in military strategy, made enemies at the two ends of Europe,—Spain and Russia. The Russian disaster to his army was the beginning of the end. The entry of the United States at the moment when the contest in Europe was most critical, 1812, forced the sea power of Britain, already greatly dispersed, to a

[1] Mahan, *Influence of Sea Power on the French Revolution*, II. 242, 408, 409.

greater dispersion in protecting her trade routes and markets.[1] A friendly Atlantic seaboard in America with its convenient harbors, as in the Seven Years' War, was a great asset to any sea power. Deprived of these American ports for food, ships' stores, shelter from storms, and especially for the interchange of commerce, Britain would be compelled greatly to increase her naval force to protect the avenues of trade to her home ports and thence to her greatest market,—the Continent of Europe, from which Napoleon, in his last desperate effort to starve Britain into submission, was trying to exclude British goods. On the other hand, France, virtually an ally of America in 1812, might at any time use these American ports and the great resources of food and raw products in America. She might have availed herself of American products, but she did not, and for the same reason that Germany in the World War could not. Napoleon had constructed ships industriously enough after Trafalgar; but his fleets, by the relentless vigilance of the British Navy, were kept, like the German Navy at Kiel, locked up in their home ports; and France had lost the assistance of her colonies by reason of that same dominating sea power, as Germany lost her colonies in the World War. Such being the maritime power of Britain, whose mainstay was six hundred dreadnaughts and first-class cruisers,[2] what was the governing principle for the United States in this War of 1812 to adopt, a country without a single ship of the line and with a total of twenty-one frigates and sloops of war?

This governing principle, the plan of a great campaign of war by which all military factors, the harmonized cooperation of army and navy, are to operate is called strategy. The story is well known of Napoleon, sprawled

[1] Corbett, *Some Principles of Maritime Strategy*, pp. 280, 281.
[2] James, *Naval History of Britain*, VI. Appendix 21.

on the floor of his office over a map of Europe into which he was sticking various-colored pins. He explained to his amazed secretary, "We shall be here [sticking a pin] on such a day, the Austrians there [another pin]." Weeks afterward, the secretary, yet more surprised, rode with his great chief into each of these pin-pricked spots on schedule time. Strategy is simply such a comprehensive, unified plan, thought out on paper with mathematical precision. Like mathematics, it is true for all ages and for all places. Tactics, on the other hand, is the plan of operations of armies and navies after they come in contact, and varies with the introduction of new inventions and weapons,—steam, gunpowder, the rifle, the submarine, barrage fire, etc. In addition to strategy and tactics, technical writers apply the term logistics to communications, to the getting of fleets and armies to the battle-ground, and to their maintenance. Strategy then is the head that plans, tactics the fist that strikes, and logistics the nerves that continue to keep in communication the plans of the head and the power of the fist.

To a strategical plan the situation of the United States —and especially its numerous harbors with the St. Lawrence and the Great Lakes separating it from Canada, a great colony of a distant enemy—offered many advantages which compensated somewhat for the scantiness of American military forces. Nature itself had determined the strategy most advantageous for the United States. According to these natural conditions, the strategy of the war had two phases,—a defensive phase for the navy on the Atlantic seaboard against British commerce and communications and an offensive phase for the army and navy on the Canadian border.

The New England coast with its wide harbors and violent storms of winter made blockading difficult and the slip-

ping out of raiders easy. Of course, if America had had even one respectable fleet of a dozen ships of the line, as Robert Morris and Stoddert had often urged, the enemy's fleets might have been forced to remain concentrated at their bases, Halifax and Bermuda. During the decade before 1812, when the war was plainly approaching, Congress appropriated money for two new brigs and two sloops of war to protect a commerce as great as England's,—as if a city, growing from one hundred thousand to two hundred thousand added four policemen to its force. Owing to the paucity of American men-of-war, the British were able gradually to eliminate or blockade the few American frigates. To the British strategy of commercial blockade of the Atlantic coast, America's only reply could be commerce-raiding and threats on the enemy's Canadian communications. Aggressive and remarkable as were the achievements of the handful of American cruisers and of the five hundred privateers, they were doomed in the long run to be driven to cover. Mahan aptly contrasts the efficiency of England's blockade and America's reply in these words: "To cut off access to a city is much more certainly accomplished by holding the gates than by scouring the country in search of persons seeking to enter it."[1]

The British blockade became gradually so rigorous that it gave England an opportunity to occupy the Chesapeake, burn the American capital, seize eastern Maine and Mobile, and attempt by the battle of New Orleans the conquest of Louisiana and the Mississippi. In the face of this blockade and of the military occupation of the American seaboard, the strategy of the Americans could only be defensive; it should have been at least an offensive-defensive to prevent British throttling of their ports. As it was, however, the American strategy of the Atlantic seaboard

[1] Mahan, *Sea Power in Its Relations to the War of 1812*, I. 288.

was—if we consider the great odds—remarkably aggressive.

On the other hand, the second phase of the strategy of the United States should properly have been an offensive Canadian campaign. Quite irrespective of the fact that the people of the West, led by Henry Clay, then a War Democrat, called for the conquest of Canada, an attempt to overrun the Dominion was entirely correct from the military point of view as an important factor leading to a quick decision. The United States, having no means of invading England, or of capturing her West Indian possessions, had in Canada a vast property belonging to the enemy, which, if captured, would force a humiliating peace. For this conquest, nature again, as on the Atlantic seaboard, favored the Americans. The geographical situation gave the United States the interior lines, that is, the shortest and quickest routes, by water, to the enemy's bases. These routes began at New York, the source of supplies, and led via the Hudson and Mohawk rivers to Ontario, or via Lakes George and Champlain to Montreal. From Albany the Americans therefore could move to either Sackett's Harbor on Ontario, or to Montreal on the St. Lawrence, and so could keep the enemy in doubt as to their objective and thus prevent his concentration at either spot. Moreover, the Great Lakes afforded splendid support to the armies of the nation whose naval forces controlled them.

In those days of poor but passable roads on the American side, and all but impassable roads in Canada, these water-routes by rivers and lakes to and along the Canadian border outlined what should have been the American strategy of the war. Montreal should have been the great objective. Lying at the apex of an angle, one of whose legs runs south through waterways to New York, the other west through the Great Lakes, Montreal, if occupied by

American forces, would have stopped the long reach of British sea power right there, and with the American occupation of Montreal, Canada would have been doomed.[1] But instead, the British got the start on the Americans. With only forty-five hundred troops in all Canada, two thirds of which were in Montreal and Quebec, the British under an efficient young general, Brock—helped greatly by the "amazing incompetence" of the American generals —early in the war captured Detroit and Mackinac. The fall of these two places on connecting links of the Great Lakes secured the British right wing in Canada and gave the conquerors the help of Tecumseh's Indians, who, anxious only for food and plunder, readily joined the winning side. The Canadian border now assumed the usual military front, right, center, and left,—i. e., Lakes Erie, Ontario, and the St. Lawrence, respectively, with centers at Detroit, Kingston, and Montreal. The American front had as its right, center, and left, Lakes Champlain, Ontario, and Erie, centering respectively at Plattsburg, Sackett's Harbor, and Presqu'isle (Erie). The American strategy should have concentrated on the British left, which was in direct contact with the British Navy; if this flank fell, the rest of the line would crumble. The tree should have been cut here at the roots at Montreal; the later lopping of its two great branches at Erie and Champlain was too late to allow a vigorous offensive campaign. The American military strategy by reason of superannuated and incompetent commanders and misdirected energy during the years 1812 and 1813 lost its great opportunity to conquer Canada. By the year 1814 it was too late; Napoleon had abdicated and more British troops could now be spared for the Canadian border. But the American Navy under Perry on Lake Erie and under Mac-

[1] Mahan, *Sea Power in Its Relations to the War of 1812*, I. 308

donough on Champlain prevented the threatened disaster to American arms on the northern frontier; the decisive victories of these two won back the offensive on the Canadian border for the Americans.

We may therefore say, in conclusion, that the sea power of Britain, while it dominated the world and broke a great tyrant, was itself checked by sea power in the War of 1812. The young sea power of America, despite its handicaps, prevented the conquest of any part of American soil; in this sense it gave America the victory in this second war for American independence.

CHAPTER VII

COMMERCIAL BLOCKADE AND COMMERCE-RAIDING AS WEAPONS OF SEA POWER

WE have seen that the strategy of the War of 1812 presented two main aspects, the defensive on the seaboard and the offensive on the Canadian border. It will be the object of this chapter to consider in more detail the former of these aspects, the war on the Atlantic Ocean. This phase was characterized during the three summers of 1812, 1813, and 1814, by the blockade of United States commerce by Great Britain, which gradually tightened until, in the last year, it amounted to the strangle hold of a wrestler upon his opponent. During the first season (1812) England, to foster her trade—the sinews of her war with Napoleon—and also to foster disunion and disloyalty in the United States, left the New England ports unmolested. New England was opposed to the war, and by a conciliatory attitude in this quarter, England hoped to destroy the unity of effort in her enemy, and, by her system of licensing neutral and American vessels [1] and by fostering contraband trade with Canada, she could finance with her great West Indian commerce the vast coalition armies in Europe and leave something to spare for her small Canadian army. Halifax, at the intersection of the three lines to England, the West Indies, and the Great Lakes, became not only an important point of strategy for

[1] Mahan, *Sea Power in Its Relations to the War of 1812*, I. 409–411.

her navy but a still more important focal point of trade. The next year (1813) Admiral Warren, in chief command in the western Atlantic, declared all ports south of New London in blockade; with increased naval forces he now instituted a more vigorous throttling of American ports, especially Chesapeake and Delaware bays. And during the last year (1814), under Warren's successor, Vice-Admiral Cochrane, England sealed up the whole Atlantic coast so tightly that the smallest coastwise traffic found itself endangered. Even starvation in some isolated spots, and terrorism, like the German U-boat menace, followed in the wake of British sea power. In considering, therefore, the war on the seaboard, we must remember this progressive change of policy of Great Britain during the three years 1812, 1813, and 1814,—a policy due to her gradual release from the great pressure of Napoleon, a virtual but rather incongruous ally of the American republic. Also, the change of policy was due to the determination of Great Britain to coördinate military effort on the seaboard and on the Canadian border and by sharper methods to force America to terms. The war that began by opposition in some parts of the United States to fighting "our brothers" in Canada and England, gradually roused the old intense bitter hatred in both belligerents, a hatred that in extreme cases manifested itself in outrages on non-combatants such as the burning of peaceful villages on the Chesapeake.

According to these three periods in Britain's policy, we find somewhat similar changes in the American counters to her thrusts. To the commercial blockade, America's answer, her only answer, was commerce-destruction on the high seas. For this her powerful 44-gun frigates were admirably adapted, especially during the first year, when England had not as yet an overwhelming force off United

States ports. Later, as these few frigates were locked up by more powerful squadrons, the smaller national sloops of war and the great number of American privateers, handier and speedier, kept up incessant raids at the pivotal points of British trade. The frigates could meet and destroy the cruisers of their class acting as blockaders and convoys, as watch-dogs of the avenues of trade. The smaller units, national and privateer, preyed more on the trade itself; and these, as the war progressed and as the cumulative forces of more powerful British squadrons barred the ports of the Atlantic seaboard, went farther afield to the pivotal points, the cross-roads, the beginnings and endings, of British trade,—i. e., to British home waters, to the African coast and its adjacent islands, and to the Caribbean. Of the American forces so used in commerce-destruction there were 21 national ships of all classes against 1000 in the British service. Against the 21 American war-ships, of which only 14 were in commission, and of which the largest were the 3 fine 44's, *President, Constitution* and *United States,* England had 236 ships of the line (dreadnaughts), and 659 frigates and smaller cruisers.[1] The United States had further some 250 gunboats, a hobby of Jefferson's that proved of no military value. In addition the United States developed rapidly during the war that readily improvised force of a country without a navy, privateers. These, which numbered in the aggregate 526, contributed considerably in this war of attrition to win a less harsh peace. But a couple of dozen ships of the line, or even frigates, would have been a far cheaper and far more efficient means of combating England's strangulation of American commerce.

[1] For a complete list of the twenty-one American national ships, see Soley, *Naval Campaign of 1812,* U. S. Naval Institute, VII. 302, 303.

This force of fourteen national ships seemed so insignificant to the Washington government that it would have dismantled them or used them as harbor defense during the war, if it had not been for the energetic and patriotic remonstrances of such officers as Bainbridge and Stewart, who saw even in this puny force some possibility for harassing the great commerce of the enemy. The event amply bore out these officers' opinions. But how could such a force be best utilized? Commodore Rodgers was in favor of sending one squadron to the British Isles and the rest to the West Indies. Bainbridge and Decatur, on the other hand, believed in scattering the fourteen over the seas in individual cruises. This latter course would leave less trace than a big squadron, would avoid the danger of having all one's eggs in one basket and so losing the whole, and would tend to scatter the enemy's cruisers in running the raiders to cover. Both plans were adopted, but the whole force was so insignificant that a squadron could amount to hardly more than two units at any one time. But they were nothwithstanding dignified with the name squadron. Commodore Rodgers made a cruise in the first weeks of the war to the British Isles and home via Madeira, and succeeded in demonstrating his theory of forcing the enemy, short of ships in the Atlantic at this period, to remain concentrated. The first attempt at deconcentration, in the case of the *Guerrière,* as we shall see, proved fatal. Three American squadrons, in October, 1812, set out along the triangular trade route,—to the African coast, West Indies, and home. But the glory of this war for Americans was won, not by squadron actions except on the Great Lakes, but by single ships cruising alone,—according to the bolder suggestions of Decatur and Bainbridge. The most famous of these single-ship duels were the *Constitution-Guerrière,* the *United States-Macedonian,* and the *Con-*

stitution-Java, all frigate actions and all American victories and all won during the first year of the war, when Britain's vigilance in the western Atlantic was necessarily limited. As this vigilance increased, the American frigates were gradually locked up by overwhelming blockading forces in ports, whence they sailed, if at all, at great peril. But the nimbler, handier, and smaller American cruisers, especially the sloops of war of the class of the *Wasp* and the *Hornet,* added throughout the war to the remarkable achievements of this seemingly contemptible little navy of the United States.

It is the purpose of this chapter to study the more important duels of these few national American ships and to take a glance at the work of the American privateers in their attempts to break the ever-tightening cordon of British blockaders of American commerce,—to trace, in a word, the effect of commerce-raiding as a weapon against the commercial blockade.

The cruise of Rodgers's squadron, while failing to encounter a big enemy merchant fleet, was indirectly the cause of the first disaster to a British frigate. Rodgers's unknown whereabouts forced the British squadron, under Captain Broke, to remain united, to sail far out to sea to convoy a merchant fleet bound for England, and, after sending the *Guerrière* back to Halifax to refit, to return to their station near the Atlantic seaports.

Meanwhile, Hull, early in July, in the *Constitution* was hurrying from the Chesapeake, a bay easily shut up so tightly that he might never again have the opportunity to get to sea. En route to New York he sighted, a dozen miles off the Jersey coast, a sail which he hoped was one of Rodgers's squadron but which at daylight of July 17th turned out to be from Broke's squadron. Then ensued a chase remarkable for the duration, sixty hours, and for the

skill of Hull in eluding capture against great odds. During most of the pursuit he was on soundings and was handicapped by lack of wind. In such circumstances he used his boats for towing, dropped anchors far ahead, and warped his ship along, and on occasion set all sails, even studdingsails, whenever a breeze sprang up. Toward the end of the long pursuit, Hull, seeing a squall of wind and rain ahead, "let everything go by the run apparently in the utmost confusion, as if unable to show a yard of canvas. . . . The enemy, perceiving this, hastened to get everything snug, before the gust should reach them; but no sooner had they got their sails furled than Captain Hull had his courses and topsails set and the *Constitution* darted forward with great rapidity."[1] During this ruse, which gave Hull a long lead, he skilfully picked up his launches, in spite of his speed of ten knots, while the British, who had on the approach of the squall cut all their boats adrift, spent several days in securing theirs.

It must be noted that the pursuers had many advantages; one of their fleetest units might have gotten within gunshot and winged the chase, so destroying the latter's speed, a circumstance that nearly bore fruit at one stage; moreover, the British had a whole squadron to draw from for towing-launches, an advantage of which they made every use. On the other hand, these towing-boats were peculiarly vulnerable for the stern-chasers of the pursued. But the honors remained with Hull. With masterly seamanship and inventive skill, he had taken advantage of every device; his success was due to a careful use of such details, each small in itself, but decisive in the aggregate. Finding New York closely blockaded, he took refuge in Boston.

[1] *Naval Monument*, pp. 8, 9. See also an interesting account of the chase in *The Autobiography of Commodore Morris*, pp. 51–55.

ACTIONS ON THE HIGH SEAS IN THE WAR OF 1812

AP	= *Argus* vs. *Pelican*
CB	= Chase of the *Constitution*
CC	= *Constitution* vs. *Cyane* and *Levant*
CG	= *Constitution* vs. *Guerrière*
CJ	= *Constitution* vs. *Java*
CL	= *Chesapeake* vs. *Leopard*
CS	= *Chesapeake* vs. *Shannon*
EB	= *Enterprise* vs. *Boxer*
EC	= *Essex* vs. *Cherub* and *Phoebe*
EP	= *Peacock* vs. *Epervier*
HP	= *Hornet* vs. *Peacock*
PE	= *President* vs. *Endymion*
PLB	= *President* vs. *Little Belt*
PH	= *Hornet* vs. *Penguin*.
USM	= *United States* vs. *Macedonian*
WA	= *Wasp* vs. *Avon*
WF	= *Wasp* vs. *Frolic*
WR	= *Wasp* vs. *Reindeer*

On August 2d, Hull, bent on commerce-raiding and fearing blockade, slipped out of Boston Harbor. For, while the British showed leniency toward Boston merchantmen in this first year, they, of course, did not extend this immunity to raiders like the *Constitution.* Hull cruised to the vicinity of Halifax, a great supply point, and was on his way toward Britain's second cis-Atlantic base, Bermuda, when on August 19th, some seven hundred and fifty miles east of Boston, he fell in with the *Guerrière,* Captain Dacres, on her way to Halifax, as above noted. Both captains immediately made ready for action and manœuvered for position, like two wary fencers trying to give or avoid the deadly thrust. The most deadly thrust was in those days called a raking fire,—that is, a broadside down the length of an enemy ship, where well-aimed shots would do the most damage in sweeping the crowded decks of guns and men. In manœuvering for a raking position the frigate captain also tried to keep to windward of his antagonist,—to retain the weather-gage as it was called,—a position that gave him speed and manœuvering control. In the action between the *Constitution* and the *Guerrière,* Hull, with the weather-gage, to avoid being raked approached in a zig-zag course, or yawed, as it was called, while Dacres with the similar object of giving or avoiding thrusts turned in semicircles, i. e., wore ship, back and forth several times across the path of the oncoming *Constitution* (a, b).[1] After three-quarters of an hour of such manœuvers Hull with his greater sail power drew up alongside of Dacres, and both frigates now sailed on parallel courses before the wind and at close range (c). Under the close and accurate fire of the *Constitution,* the *Guerrière* lost her mizzenmast, which falling over the star-

[1] Letters a, b, c, etc., refer to synchronous positions in the accompanying diagram, *Frigate Actions of the War of 1812,* page 111.

board (right) side acted like a rudder and crippled her manœuvering power. Hull took instant advantage by running across the *Guerrière's* bows and pouring in two raking broadsides (d). Then Dacres with similar purpose to cross Hull's path and rake him succeeded only in fouling his bowsprit in the *Constitution's* rigging (e). In these critical moments both sides tried to board and to repel boarders, and sent heavy musketry fire from aloft that inflicted the severest losses on both crews. After the two frigates drifted apart, the *Guerrière's* foremast, owing to the loss of stays and shrouds, toppled overboard, also carrying away in the crash the mainmast, and she pitched in the heavy sea a helpless and beaten hulk. Hull now hauled off to make hasty repairs; it was a custom of the American raiders to make such repairs after an action so as to be ready instantly in case another British cruiser appeared on the horizon. On his return Hull received the surrender of Dacres. During the night he transferred the wounded and prisoners to the *Constitution* and the next day, finding the *Guerrière* too badly damaged to bring to port, blew her up.

In this first round between what we may call commerce-raiding and the commercial blockade Hull had won a victory that caused a warm glow of pride in America, a growing pride that helped to supplant the indifference to the war in New England, and which caused a corresponding gloom among the British, who referred sarcastically to the American frigates as disguised ships of the line. Of course, the American frigates of the class of the *Constitution* were in gun power and crew superior, about 30 per cent., to the British frigates, but this fact and the superior marksmanship are, as Roosevelt in his "Naval War of 1812" points out, to the credit of the Americans. Hull had broken the spell of British invincibility at sea. In Roosevelt's words,

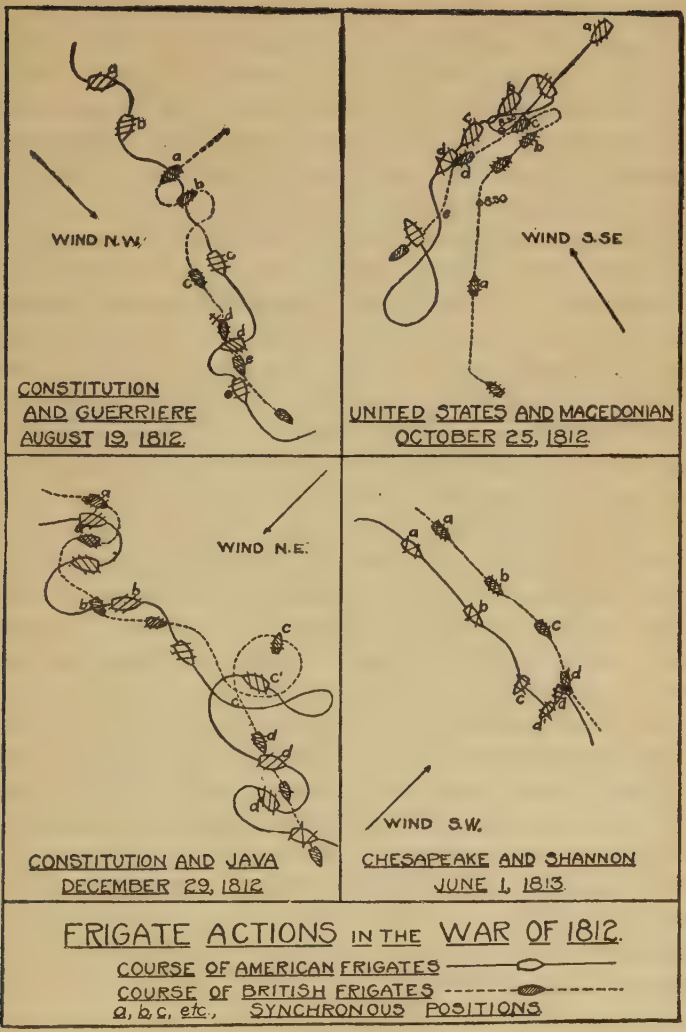
Hull's skill in his evasion of Broke's squadron and in his defeat shortly afterwards of Dacres, "places him above any single-ship captain of the war." Hull's victory, coming three days after the disastrous defeat of his uncle, General Hull, on the Canadian border, acted as a solace for the loss of Michigan. Sea power against great odds had won where land power with great odds in its favor had lost.

The superior gunnery of the American raiders was demonstrated more clearly in the next action between the United States sloop of war *Wasp,* Captain Jacob Jones, and the British brig *Frolic,* Captain Whinyates, five hundred miles east of the Chesapeake, October 18, 1812. The *Wasp* in a commerce-raid was following the track of merchantmen from the Gulf of Mexico to Europe and the *Frolic* was on convoy duty for homeward-bound traders. Both cruisers, which were of the smaller types, and with a slight preponderance (275 pounds to 250) in broadside in favor of the British brig, had suffered damage in the gales of the preceding days. The sea was still running high. The two antagonists attempted little manœuvering and began the action at fifty yards' distance on parallel courses that gradually converged until they fell aboard of each other. The British here, as in the case of the *Guerrière,* claimed a "superior fire," by which they meant in both actions quicker fire. But the hits were entirely in favor of the Americans. The *Frolic's* shots flew high, hitting the rigging of the *Wasp,* while the latter's hulled the *Frolic,* causing great damage to masts, ship, and crew, so much so that when the *Wasp's* men boarded, they found only four men alive on deck,—three officers, all wounded, and a seaman. Unfortunately for Captain Jones, at the moment of victory a British 74, the *Poictiers,* appeared on the scene and took both victor and vanquished in tow to Bermuda. Captain Whinyates had fought with British

tenacity and thus had prolonged the action long enough to retrieve the disaster of capture by recapture. But this action, like the previous one, showed the British that they could not let up in their vigilance in convoying their merchant fleets. The challenge of the small American Navy as raiders was a real menace in spite of overwhelming odds and the stringent blockade.

A few days before the *Wasp* left the Delaware capes for her eventful cruise, Rodgers, on October 8th, had set sail from Boston with two small squadrons, which parted company on October 11th. The *President* and the *Congress* under Rodgers's own command constituted a first squadron, which sailed to the Cape Verde Islands, back along latitude 18 degrees north, and home, in all eleven thousand miles. During this cruise, in which Rodgers touched at the great cross-roads of trade from the East Indies, Africa, South America, and the West Indies, he encountered just five enemy merchantmen, of which he captured two. This failure in results was due to the rigid enforcement of the British convoy system now in operation. The second American squadron, made up of the *United States* and the *Argus,* under Decatur, and a third squadron, consisting of the *Constitution,* the *Hornet,* and the *Essex,* under Bainbridge, who set sail from New York on October 26th, were more prolific in results. For, in addition to their merchant prizes, Decatur and Bainbridge were each to bag a British frigate, Lawrence in the *Hornet* was to destroy the brig *Peacock,* and Porter in the *Essex* was destined to make a cruise that placed him in the forefront of commerce-raiders.

Shortly after parting company with Rodgers, Decatur, in the *United States,* separated also from the *Argus,* preferring, in accordance with his earlier expressed suggestions, to cruise alone. He was making his way toward the


WIND N.W.
CONSTITUTION AND GUERRIERE AUGUST 19, 1812.
WIND S.SE
UNITED STATES AND MACEDONIAN OCTOBER 25, 1812.
WIND N.E.
CONSTITUTION AND JAVA DECEMBER 29, 1812.
WIND S.W.
CHESAPEAKE AND SHANNON JUNE 1, 1813.
FRIGATE ACTIONS IN THE WAR OF 1812.
COURSE OF AMERICAN FRIGATES
COURSE OF BRITISH FRIGATES
a, b, c, etc., SYNCHRONOUS POSITIONS

Madeiras when at daybreak, October 25th, the lookout in his masthead made out a sail some twelve miles to the south-southwest. This sail later turned out to be the British frigate *Macedonian,* Captain Carden, who was evidently approaching on a line that would eventually cross Decatur's course at a wide obtuse angle (a). The two frigates were therefore sailing on opposite tacks, with the wind south-southeast giving Carden the weather-gage. From the court-martial proceedings of Carden's trial it appears that Carden, during the approach determined, against the advice of his first lieutenant, Hope, to retain the weather-gage rather than come to close quarters at once. As the *United States* had superior gun power, 24-pounders to 18-pounders, this decision played directly into the hands of Decatur, whose game it was to cripple or destroy his opponent with his longer-range guns before the latter's guns could reach him. Decatur, who in his earlier career showed plenty of headlong dash, played in the ensuing duel an unusually wary fence. At 8:30 A. M. he wore, i.e., turned around as if to cross Carden's course and so seize the weather-gage. Carden therefore hauled closer to the wind, so as to foil Decatur's move. Decatur then wore again, thus returning to his original course, and on passing his opponent on opposite tacks opened with a broadside at a mile's range (b). Carden after passing him also wore and gave chase, fairly well astern of Decatur, who had much the slower ship in his "Old Wagoner," as the sailors called the *United States.* As Carden was evidently attempting to come to close quarters so that his smaller guns could bear, Decatur turned first to starboard then back to port (c). Then, by hauling out the spanker and letting fly the jib-sheet, Decatur came up to the wind, and by backing the mizzen topsail, he retarded his speed and had his ship in such a position that

he could pour from his heavier guns a deadly, almost raking, fire upon his approaching opponent (d). Such an approach was disastrous for the *Macedonian*,—especially as she was coming nearly bows on, a position from which she could make little reply. Before the *Macedonian* got within close range she was a beaten ship; only her lower masts were standing; her carronades, the main reliance for close fighting, were disabled, and she had many killed and wounded. On the other hand, the *United States* was virtually "in perfect condition," a result of the cautious tactics of Decatur, who was evidently anxious to keep the *United States* intact to make sure of getting back to his distant base. With characteristic chivalry, Decatur now crossed his beaten foe's bows without giving the raking broadside, the coup de grace, so surely expected that, as he passed in silence, the Macedonians gave a cheer in the apparent belief that he was fleeing from the fight. When he returned an hour later, the *Macedonian* hauled down her colors. Decatur refused to receive the sword of Carden. The two men had been friends and some years before had had an argument as to the relative merits of 24-pounders and 18-pounders,—an argument which they tested out in this action. The power of the *United States* to the *Macedonian* was as three to two, but the comparative losses were in the ratio of one to nine in the American's favor. Notwithstanding hints from the British Admiralty to Admiral Warren that his blockade should be tighter and despite Warren's greatly increasing force in the Atlantic, Decatur succeeded in getting both frigates safely to the United States. Decatur had added another to America's scant force of raiders, which was destined, however, against the cumulative blockade to be as harmless as if it were at the bottom of the sea, except for the fact that every raider in a port required a squadron

cruising before that port winter and summer to watch it.

Two months after the *United States-Macedonian* fight, Commodore Bainbridge in the *Constitution* and Lawrence in the *Hornet* were blockading the sloop of war *Bonne Citoyenne* in a neutral port, Bahia, Brazil. In the hope of luring out the sloop to single combat, Bainbridge had left Lawrence alone on blockade and was standing out to sea when on December 29, 1812, at 9:00 A. M., he sighted two strange sail, which turned out to be the British frigate *Java,* Captain Lambert, and an American prize. As the Brazilian authorities had shown considerable irritation at various breaches of neutrality by belligerents, Bainbridge proceeded farther off shore. The *Java,* an excellent sailer under a skilful seaman, followed at the unusual speed of ten knots an hour. Now ensued a battle, lasting over two hours, which, unlike the two previous frigate actions, was a combination of both gunnery and ship evolutions,—evolutions so serpentine that it is difficult to determine the synchronous positions from the reports of the two captains. These combatants were too nimble, their manœuvers too quick, for observers of that day without stop-watches and cameras to catch the movements in this sparring contest. Indeed, the two accounts vary so hopelessly that one writer suggests that "someone's watch was adrift." But with the aid of the diagram on page 111 we hope to make clear the salient features. At approximately two in the afternoon the two ships were in contact, firing the first shot at half a mile range (a). They now wore several times to avoid each other's attempts at raking. At 2:30 P. M., the *Constitution* had her wheel shot away, an accident that forced upon Bainbridge the awkward makeshift of steering by relieving tackles (b). To offset this handicap, however, the *Constitution's* superior marks-

manship shot away the *Java's* bowsprit and cut her rigging to pieces so that at three o'clock the *Java,* heading up into the wind, gave the *Constitution* two opportunities to rake her (c and c'). Later Bainbridge, after foiling Lambert's attempt to board, crossed the Englishman's bows twice in quick succession (d and d'). This double manœuver with its accompanying fire from all angles at close quarters was the knock-out blow. A little after four o'clock the *Java,* a shattered hulk, with all spars except the lower mainmast gone, her decks a shambles, and her captain mortally wounded, gave up all resistance. As in the other two actions, the American captain now withdrew for temporary repairs and on his return received the surrender of the *Java.* After transferring her crew and passengers, Bainbridge blew her up.

Some days later, as the dying Lambert was being taken ashore from the *Constitution,* Captain Bainbridge—himself suffering from two severe wounds, and supported by two officers—came on deck to bid Captain Lambert farewell and to return his sword. Of this incident a writer says, "The contrast between the dignified, magnanimous bearing of the participants in this action and the tone of the writers who subsequently described them is very striking."[1] This stately and chivalrous courtesy among naval officers of the times had other interesting phases as seen in the challenges to combat that reflected the dueling customs of the period. On blockading the *Bonne Citoyenne* earlier, Bainbridge had given his word of honor to her captain that he would not interfere if the latter came out to answer the challenge of Captain Lawrence in the *Hornet.* The British captain quite properly declined to win any "fighting-cock glory"; so long as he was holding

[1] Hollis, *Frigate Constitution,* p. 187.

two American raiders on blockade duty, he was, from a military point of view, winning a more important battle.[1]

Lawrence, after waiting in vain for his challenger, later, off the Demerara River, met and sank a war-ship of his own class, the *Peacock*. With his sloop full of prisoners and short of provisions and water, Lawrence made for the United States, where he was to take part in his last combat, a combat which showed that British sea power was winning the race against the American commerce-raider.

Two months after his arrival in the United States, Lawrence was given the *Chesapeake*, then refitting at Boston. He was to take her to the vicinity of Halifax to act against the communications of the British Army in Canada. Outside of Boston Harbor lay the *Shannon*, under Broke, a man skilful alike with pen or sword. The British captain sent a most courteously worded challenge to Lawrence,—which the latter never got,—in which he underlined the words "even combat" in veiled allusion to the previous frigate actions, the sting of which defeats the British captains felt keenly. But the chivalrous Lawrence needed no written challenge; the presence of an equal opponent off shore was sufficient provocation for his high mettle. In spite of a crew largely new to one another and to the officers and therefore not a fighting unit, Lawrence stood out under a fair wind on June 1, 1813, to meet a rival who for seven years had commanded the *Shannon*, of which Mahan says, "there was no more thoroughly efficient ship of her class . . . during the twenty years' war with France." At a time when most British captains still had the idea of Nelson—to get so close to your opponent that your guns can't miss—Broke had adopted new ideas such as gun-sights and frequent

[1] Mahan, *Sea Power in Its Relations to the War of 1812*, II. 3.

practice with shot, not blanks, at real targets, and had by these means made his command the crack ship of the service.

As Lawrence came out, Broke chivalrously yielded to his opponent every advantage, such as the weather-gage and the opportunity for raking positions. Lawrence, evidently believing that his raw crew could do better work at the guns at point-blank range than at the more difficult task of handling the sails, kept the simple manœuver of a parallel course to Broke's. The artillery duel that ensued was sharp and short. To make matters worse for the *Chesapeake,* she had come into the action with too much headway (a);[1] therefore, despite Lawrence's attempt to luff closer to the wind, she forged ahead (b).[1] At this juncture, by reason of loss of head-sails and a disabled wheel under the accurate and destructive fire of the *Shannon,* the *Chesapeake* pointed up into the wind (c), gathered stern-board, exposed herself to the diagonal or raking fire at close range of her antagonist, and finally ran aboard of the latter (d, d'). It was in vain for the wounded Lawrence to call for boarders. Broke and his men instantly boarded the *Chesapeake,* whose remnants of a crew, without leaders, offered, to borrow Broke's words, "a desperate but disorderly resistance." The battle was all over in fifteen minutes. All things considered, the *Chesapeake's* crew behaved well; they forced the victorious crew to pay dearly for victory. They lost forty-eight killed to the *Shannon's* twenty-six. Doubtless, from the standpoint of Lawrence's major duty, commerce-destruction, it would have been wiser if he had waited for a more favorable opportunity to slip out of Boston Harbor and so to elude the blockaders and get away to his station off Halifax, but whether he was inspired by a rash over-

[1] See diagram on p. 111.

confidence in offering battle to the *Shannon,* as Mahan intimates,[1] is of no great moment now. A raiding cruise to Halifax, however successful, would have had little weight against the overwhelming pressure of British sea power. The American people have forgotten Lawrence's lack of judgment or his over-confidence, but they can never forget his dying words, "Don't give up the ship," a watch-word of the navy ever since, a clarion call ringing as true to-day as a century ago.

These frigate actions, though "indecisive of general results,"[2] formed for the sea power of a young nation a glorious tradition, which was augmented by the smaller national sloops upon which devolved more and more the duty of commerce-destroying, as the larger frigates were being hopelessly shut up in ports by the gradual tightening of the blockade. To the duels of these sloops belong the *Wasp-Frolic* and *Hornet-Peacock* encounters described above. Owing to the blockade the sloops were forced farther afield. The most famous of the later sloops, the *Argus,* the *Peacock (2d),* and the *Wasp (2d),*—the latter two new built and named after the victories of the *Hornet* and the *Wasp,*—won distinction by daring raids, like Paul Jones's in British waters. As in Paul Jones's day, too, these raiders could rely somewhat on friendly French ports for disposal of prisoners and prizes, and for repairs, if they could get by the powerful cordon of British blockaders. They sometimes, however, like the German submarines a hundred years later, had to burn or destroy their prizes at sea, first taking off specie and other valuable cargo. But unlike the Germans they sent their prisoners ashore in cartel-ships.

These raiders of the American regular navy, while in-

[1] Mahan, *Sea Power in Its Relations to the War of 1812,* II. 145.
[2] Mahan, *Sea Power in Its Relations to the War of 1812,* I. 289.

tended for commerce-destroying, did not avoid conflict with equal opponents of the British Navy. On the other hand, the American privateers, which aggregated 526, confined their operations to the enemy's commerce. Like the national ships, they operated at the cross-roads and focal points of commerce. Of these privateers perhaps the most famous and certainly the most successful were the *Yankee* and the *Chasseur*. The former made forty prizes during the war, of which thirty-four were ships or brigs, valued with their cargoes at three million dollars. The *Chasseur*, with thirty prizes to her credit, at the end of the war captured a "camouflaged" merchantman, the armed schooner *St. Lawrence*. The *Chasseur's* captain later apologized for capturing a war-ship unawares. Though privateering was a business venture, a matter of personal gain rather than patriotism; though by its big rewards it took men much needed by the regular navy; though it was on the whole a costly substitute for a regular navy, these privateers, the people's navy as it were, dealt the pride and commerce of Great Britain a weighty blow.[1] They captured all told 1,340 prizes during the war.

Such losses, however, were a small fraction of Britain's vast commerce. On the other hand, her blockade of the American coast, progressively increasing in rigor toward the end of the war, was bringing in its wake widespread distress and deep humiliation to the United States. For example, that great estuary the Chesapeake became to all intents and purposes a British lake. As around it lay the chief sections on which the country depended for its meat and grain, the British by frequent attacks endeavored to destroy the flour-mills and stores of wheat on its shores and thus starve out the American armies. They even destroyed private property and entire villages, such as

[1] Mahan, *Sea Power in Its Relations to the War of 1812*, I. 265.

Georgetown and Frederickstown at the head of the Chesapeake, as punishment for local resistance. Meanwhile they carried on a bold licensed trade through neutrals, real and pretended, and furnished the British fleets with fresh American beef "supplied from American ports, by American dealers, in American vessels."[1]—a trade later stopped by the American Government under another embargo. But despite all these minor achievements on the Chesapeake Admiral Warren failed to cut out the *Constellation* lying at *Norfolk*, a raider whose destruction was of first military importance.

Warren's measures were too mild for the British Government and he was therefore succeeded by Vice-Admiral Cochrane, who arrived in the Chesapeake in April, 1814, and inaugurated the last phase of the war on the Atlantic seaboard, a phase intended to bring home the war to Americans by a species of punitive terrorism. With a fleet of twenty sail, four of which were ships of the line, and with four thousand of Wellington's veterans, the British now inaugurated some major operations in Chesapeake Bay and in Maine, operations intended to act as diversions to help Prevost's plan of invading New York. To further the first of these purposes Cochrane sent a mixed naval and military force under General Ross up the Patuxent to destroy Commodore Barney's flotilla of barges and gunboats and to veil the real objective, Washington; and in support he also sent a division of frigates up the Potomac. Ross forced Barney to burn his boats and drove him to Bladensburg, where Barney and his four hundred seamen opposed, virtually unsupported, the march of Ross toward Washington. The undrilled American militia, the "citizen soldiery," upon which the Washington government had relied so strongly, broke and fled. The British

[1] Mahan, *Sea Power in Its Relations to the War of 1812*, II. 172.

proceeded to Washington, where they burned the Capitol and the White House, but fearing for their communications, hastily retreated, getting back to their fleet within four days from the day of departure. The British frigates in the Potomac, acting as a support of Ross, destroyed some shipping and levied a contribution on Alexandria. But owing to a little better American organization some time later, a similar attempt to levy a contribution on Baltimore failed. Not content to hold the Atlantic seaboard in a grip so tight that hardly an oyster boat could put out from shore without getting caught, the British by this attack on the national capital in a most humiliating way brought home the war to the American Government and people.

During this last year, though the harassment was severest in the Chesapeake, the British adopted also more offensive measures in New England and especially in Maine. Besides such operations as the destruction of twenty sea-going ships up the Connecticut and sixteen at Wareham, Massachusetts, they now planned to occupy Maine to "rectify the frontier." In upper Maine their communications between the two great bases, Quebec and Halifax, were endangered by American occupation. Governor Sherbrooke of Nova Scotia, therefore, in the summer of 1814 sent a combined naval and military force up the Penobscot, burned the shipping, and forced the destruction of the *John Adams* by her crew. After this, Sherbrooke, who assumed a conciliatory attitude toward the inhabitants, proclaimed the territory under the British flag. Thus by possession, which is said to be nine tenths of the law, Great Britain hoped to pave the way at the peace table for the permanent annexation of Maine.

In conclusion, we may repeat that the British commercial blockade had driven American commerce from the high

seas. Even small coasters carrying necessities made their runs from headland to headland at imminent risk of capture. In Boston alone, in September, 1813, 245 sea-going vessels, not counting coasters, were lying idle; and insurance on American bottoms had risen to 50 per cent. A commerce, once second to England's alone, fell from forty-five millions in 1811, to twenty-five millions in 1813, and to seven millions for the year ending September 30, 1814.[1] Interstate trade in the common essentials of life was carried on under circumstances so difficult that it made their cost prohibitive. Wagons of dry-goods, for example, took forty-six days from Philadelphia to South Carolina. Robert Fulton, who died during the war, estimated that enough money had been spent on wagon hire for this interstate trade to construct a complete system of inland waterways from Maine to Georgia. The general stagnation was reflected, too, in prices; a glut at the point of production caused the bottom to drop out of prices while distant communities were in isolated cases near starvation. For instance, flour worth about $4.00 a barrel in Baltimore, the wheat center, brought $25.00 at New Orleans; and inversely, sugar worth $9.00 a hundredweight in New Orleans brought $26.50 in Baltimore. After the blockade was lifted, sugar dropped overnight in New York from $26.00 to $12.50 per hundredweight. In the midst of plenty, a country that had helped feed the world was in want. The commercial blockade was the Continental System in America; it had the American seaboard by the throat.

[1] Mahan, *Sea Power in Its Relations to the War of 1812*, II, 201.

CHAPTER VIII

SEA POWER ON THE GREAT LAKES

WHILE the naval operations on the Atlantic seaboard, logically by reason of American unpreparedness, defensive, became in reality an aggressive defensive, the Canadian border on the other hand, logically the theater of the American offensive, assumed the character of a desperate defensive. In the early days of the war leaders in Congress like Calhoun and Clay were cock-sure of success in Canada. "So far from being unprepared, sir," declared Calhoun in a speech in March, 1812, "I believe that in four weeks from the time a declaration of war is heard on our frontier, the whole of Upper Canada . . . and a part of Lower Canada will be in our power." Yet such words, despite the gross neglect of military preparation during the decade before the war, were not altogether vainglorious boasting. England, handicapped by a huge European war that had been sapping her energies for twenty years, could spare only a paltry three or four thousand men for the whole border. On the other hand, the merest glance at the map will convince the reader of the great advantages of the United States for an aggressive campaign, especially if directed early at Montreal, situated at the apex of waterways to the westward and southward. The United States had the short direct routes—the interior lines, as they are called in strategy—to the enemy's country; and the Great Lakes, if under American control, would afford the quick-

est and safest communications. But these natural advantages were thrown away by the "broken-down" army leaders like Dearborn and Hull. These men, veterans of the War of Independence and not without distinction in their earlier days, formed a striking contrast to a vigorous aggressive young general like Brock. The latter had been with Nelson at Copenhagen and demonstrated Nelson's idea, "Boldest methods are safest," in his quick decisive blow on August 16, 1812, in forcing General Hull, who had a much superior force, to surrender Detroit. This was a disaster to American arms, for with Detroit fell Michigan and the offensive on the American left wing. In lieu of Calhoun's predicted invasion of Canada, the United States had now the threat of being itself invaded. Moreover, the Northwest Indians became allies of the victors as a result of Brock's stroke. This disaster showed a lesson often forgotten in peace time, that war is a young man's game. What the army under its old leaders lost the navy with its young leaders regained. These youthful naval leaders, Chauncey, Perry, and Macdonough, were to reestablish in part at least the offensive on the Canadian border. But even Chauncey saw too late the great opportunity and advantage of Montreal. In 1814 he declared the tree ought to have been felled at its base at Montreal instead of lopping off great branches like Lakes Erie, Ontario, and Champlain. If he had seen this in 1812, it would quickly have brought about Calhoun's prophecy. But Perry by lopping off Lake Erie, and Macdonough by lopping off Champlain, prevented England from getting a lasting grip on the Northwest and on New York.

Though the season of 1812 therefore ended in disaster to American arms on the border, the chance to retrieve misfortune by a vigorous American offensive in 1813 still remained. They say Opportunity knocks at every man's

door, and at every nation's, at least once. Such opportunity came to the American naval commanders on Lakes Erie and Ontario and to the American nation in the summer of 1813. During this year England with her hands still tied by the great European conflict could send but small reënforcements to Canada and then only long after the ice broke up. The opportunity so presented was seized by Oliver Hazard Perry, the American commander on Lake Erie, and lost by Isaac Chauncey, Perry's superior, on Lake Ontario. The two British naval commanders, Barclay and Yeo, were also trying to seize the opportunity for control of these two lakes. To attain this control all four naval commanders were busy in two ship-building races, which culminated in a decision on Erie and a drawn battle on Ontario.

Such decision on Erie would help the American cause considerably, but Ontario, nearer the heart of British sea power, was the more important; the artery of British communications, if severed at Lake Ontario, would have cut off the life's blood of all British military operations west of Montreal and thus insured the crushing of the British right wing. But both Commodore Chauncey and Sir James Yeo on Ontario played an over-cautious game. War is a game of risks whose stakes the over-cautious seldom win. The able fighter makes careful preparations, takes his chance, and wins victory by his boldness, if his boldness stops short of rashness. At the respective American and British naval bases on Ontario—Sackett's Harbor and Kingston—Chauncey and Yeo built ships with all the energy and speed their limited resources allowed. As one won a temporary preponderance in tonnage he ranged the lake and protected military communications, only to take refuge in his base as soon as his opponent got a slight mathematical superiority. During this ship-building race, in the critical year 1813, Chauncey on April 27th, captured York (Toronto), a sec-

ondary British base, and seized the 22-gun *Duke of Gloucester* and destroyed a 30-gun ship on the stocks; while the British made a similar raid on Sackett's Harbor a month later and burned the *Duke of Gloucester* and a large quantity of military stores. For a month the British had control of the lake and recaptured York. Then on July 20th Chauncey completed his heaviest ship, the *General Pike*. During the summer the two over-wary contestants came to blows just three times. Of these actions the first was near Fort Niagara, August 10th, the second off the Genesee River, September 11th, and the last off York, on September 28th. All three actions were fought so warily, for fear either side should lose a unit, that the season ended with neither side in control of the lake. Opportunity never knocked again for Chauncey; the next year, 1814, England, free in Europe, could with the great reach of her released sea power hand over guns and men to Yeo. The latter soon had an overwhelming superiority, his strongest unit being a ship of the line of a hundred and two guns.

From these three actions fought by Chauncey and Yeo on Lake Ontario we may draw one important lesson, as true to-day as then: A battle-ship with its unity of organization and mounting ten guns is superior to five cruisers under different commanders and mounting altogether ten guns. On Lake Ontario, Chauncey had three larger ships, of which the 800-ton *Pike* was the most important unit, and ten schooners,—the whole flotilla so heterogeneous that they were like three warriors entering battle with ten children in tow. On the other hand, Yeo had six units of various rigs and sizes but fairly homogeneous in manœuvering ability. The Americans had long guns in the ratio of four to one, but in carronades the British had a superiority of two to one. Chauncey, therefore, would prefer long-range battle, while Yeo would prefer to

come to close grips where his carronades with their heavy, smashing charge would be effective. But Yeo would have to have plenty of wind to approach quickly or be sunk by the long guns of his enemy before he could get close enough to strike a blow. If, therefore, Chauncey had left his useless smaller vessels at his base, his three larger units with their more homogeneous speed would have been more than a match for Yeo's flotilla; and indeed the *General Pike* alone under favorable conditions—i.e., with the weather-gage—would have been equal to the whole of Yeo's force.[1]

To this naval campaign on Ontario the campaign on Erie was a striking contrast. In the midst of his indecisive work, Commodore Chauncey wrote this advice to his subordinate, Perry, on Lake Erie: "The first object will be to destroy or cripple the enemy's fleet, but in all attempts upon the fleet you ought to use great caution, for the loss of a single vessel may decide the fate of the campaign." By a strange irony of fate, Perry, not heeding too narrowly the "great caution" of his superior, was destined to win by this very means—"the loss of a single vessel"—a decisive battle; this too, at the very time that Chauncey was fighting his long-drawn-out second action.

The foundation for Perry's victory was laid during the fall of 1812 by Lieutenant Jesse D. Elliott, who took charge of the work on Lake Erie on September 7th of that year. With great energy but poor judgment he established a temporary navy-yard at Black Rock near Buffalo. Besides acquiring some schooners by purchase, he cut out the armed British brigs *Detroit* and *Caledonia.* The latter with its valuable cargo of furs he brought to his base, but the *Detroit*—which, by the way, had formerly been the U. S. S. *Adams,* captured from the Americans and renamed *Detroit* in honor of their victory—Elliott burned to prevent recap-

[1] Mahan, *Sea Power in Its Relations to the War of 1812,* II. 54–56.

ture. The British, though still possessing a superior force on Lake Erie, felt these losses keenly. By his quick and decisive action Elliott was in a fair way to dispute the control of this lake with the British commander, Barclay. Of course, he regretted the loss of the *Detroit*, with which he might have gained full control before winter, but his small force restricted the freedom of the lake to the British; it was a real threat to British communications. Both sides realized the vital importance of these communications,—these short interior lines by water along which to transport food and troops,—and both sides worked feverishly to get a superior force with which to gain the undisputed control on which the fate of the military campaign in the Northwest depended.

With the arrival on March 27, 1813, of Commander Oliver Hazard Perry, who now superseded Elliott in command on Erie, the ship-building race between him and Captain Robert H. Barclay was on in earnest. Both, like their immediate superiors, Chauncey and Yeo, on Lake Ontario, were young and full of energy; both, again like their superiors, despite youthful years were veterans in the service of the Tripolitan War and Nelson's great battle respectively, but both had more dash and initiative than their superiors, and both were left largely to their fate by these superiors, who were indeed in this summer of 1813 too much occupied with each other to spare men and guns for their subordinates. Both commanders worked under great handicaps to create their forces. If Perry had to bring everything except timber—iron, guns, ammunition, sails, cordage, provisions—a distance of five hundred miles from Philadelphia, Barclay had on his side to contend against severer weather conditions, impassable roads, and less-developed industries of the Canadian side. If Perry was handicapped by lack of skilled artisans and by insubor-

dinate militia, Barclay longed for regulars instead of Indians and for real salt-water tars in place of his Canadian lake sailors.

But despite all these handicaps each commander achieved wonders in the construction and equipment of his flotilla. Perry had by midsummer a force headed by the 500-ton brigs *Lawrence* and *Niagara,* armed largely with carronades and constituting the important units of his squadron. Besides these two Elliott had captured the brig *Caledonia* and secured half a dozen schooners. Barclay, on the other hand, had completed the new ships *Detroit* and *Queen Charlotte,* armed with long guns, the nucleus of his squadron; and besides he had the brig *Hunter* and three schooners. Their force in ships was therefore as nine is to six in favor of the Americans, with a preponderance of long guns on the British side. Both flotillas were short-handed; Perry for example had only 490 of the estimated complement of 740 required to man the squadron properly. He had remonstrated about the inferior lot of blacks, soldiers, and boys sent him by Chauncey in a recent detachment, which made up his 490, to which Chauncey replied, "I have yet to learn that the color of the skin, or the cut and trimmings of the coat, can affect a man's qualifications or usefulness"; and he added, "There will be a great deal expected of you from your country." This rebuke, uttered by one whose inaction presented such a contrast to Perry's later achievement, nearly caused the quick-tempered Perry to resign, a loss that would have been disastrous, for Perry was the American Navy on Lake Erie.

In the earlier campaign on Erie Barclay made two serious strategical mistakes—mistakes either of which if avoided would have made the battle and its crushing defeat impossible. The first of these was his failure to prevent Perry from transferring his ship-building base from Black

Rock to Erie (Presqu'isle). Perry found Black Rock a poor location because it was within point-blank range of the enemy's guns across the Niagara, and also because the current was so strong there that he could have taken his schooners into the lake only by warping them with great labor against the rapid current. Under these difficulties Perry had watched for a favorable opportunity, eluded Barclay by skirting under cover of a fog along the shore to Erie, where he established his new base in a good harbor, protected by a sand-bar across its entrance.

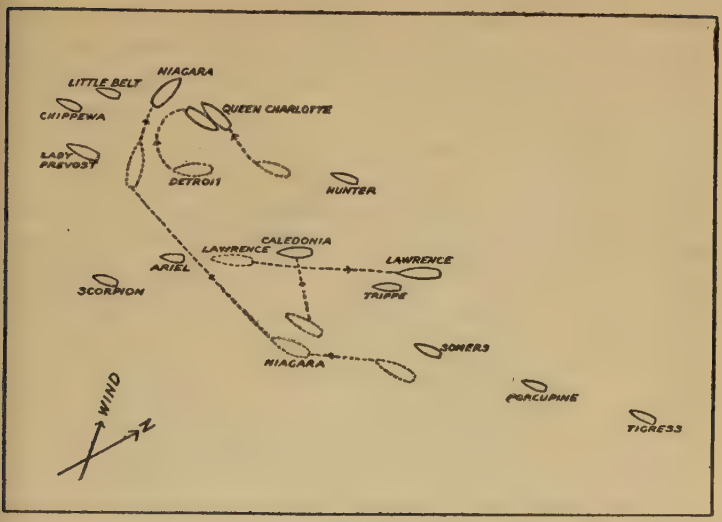
This very sand-bar led to Barclay's second strategical error in the Erie campaign. Chauncey and Perry had decided on Erie as a base during the previous winter, not because of this bar, but in spite of it. To Erie the much needed cordage, sail-cloth, guns, and ammunition could be brought on the last stage of their transport, from Pittsburgh, by water all the way except the last fifteen miles. By midsummer Barclay anticipated Perry in completing some of his units and with these at once set up a blockade of Perry, which lasted from July 20th to August 2d. Then he left without apparent reason. He had evidently not learned the lesson of his former great commander, Lord Nelson, who during his last campaign, Trafalgar, blockaded his enemy at Toulon night and day for nearly two years with such relentless vigilance that he himself did not leave the deck of his flag-ship, the *Victory*, for twenty-one months. With probably much less effort than Nelson's at Toulon, Barclay, powerfully aided by nature, should have sealed up Perry hermetically and so rendered him harmless. But the moment Barclay's vigilance was relaxed, on August 2d, Perry, whose flotilla was by now complete, took instant advantage. He lifted his schooners across the bar and stationed them off the entrance. He also mounted temporary cannon on shore in case Barclay should return and

catch him in the act of getting the large new ships, *Lawrence* and *Niagara,* out of the inner harbor. With only four to six feet of water over this bar, which extended completely across the harbor, he found it necessary to take off the *Lawrence's* guns and sink floats alongside, which on being pumped out acted as pontoons ("camels") and carried their burdens safely across. By several days' hard work Perry got his flotilla out not a moment too soon, for Barclay reappeared almost immediately, August 5th. Barclay seeing that Perry was now in much superior force to himself, retired at once to his base, Malden, there to await the completion of his largest ship, the *Detroit.* He had missed his second great opportunity to make Erie a British lake.

Perry, who could after getting across the bar range the lake at will, took up his position at Put-in-Bay, in the Bass Islands, whence he could readily intercept Barclay in case the latter made a dash for Long Point, the British supply base. As a matter of fact Barclay was in straits in early September; his men were on half-rations and the Indian allies had wantonly killed cattle earlier and were now getting restive for lack of British supplies. Finally, with only one day's flour on hand, and nagged into premature action by Prevost, Governor-General of Canada, Barclay was forced to act. Perry's watchful waiting at Put-in-Bay was rewarded on September 10, 1813, for at sunrise his lookouts caught sight of Barclay's flotilla standing out of Malden under a southwest wind. Perry got under way at once to meet it. Shortly after, the wind shifted to the southeast, thus giving Perry the windward position, or weather-gage, a great advantage for fleet manœuvers in the days before steam. Both commanders were sailing into action in single column,—i. e., all units in line, one in the wake of the other, —a time-honored formation coming down from the early

days of the sail and still the great battle line to-day, for it is the most flexible formation, since the flag-officer may readily change course, and oppose the maximum broadside and the minimum vulnerability to his opponent. In their columns both commanders had their strongest ships and brigs in the center to give the lines cohesive strength. As Perry drew nearer, he rearranged his three center units to correspond with Barclay's center, so that his flagship, the *Lawrence,* should be opposed to Barclay's *Detroit,* his *Caledonia* to the *Hunter,* and his *Niagara* to the *Queen Charlotte.* Elliott, Perry's second in command, had the *Niagara,* and Captain Finnis in the *Queen Charlotte* ably seconded Barclay. Thus the two flotillas joined battle, sailing in southerly parallel courses with Perry to windward of his enemy.

The action, which lasted from noon till three o'clock, was fought in two distinct phases, in each of which by an unfortunate accident Perry with half of his squadron was matched against virtually the whole of the enemy, a circumstance that neutralized to a large extent that superiority in number of ships which Perry had labored so successfully to achieve. As the *Lawrence* and the *Niagara* possessed chiefly batteries of heavy carronades, effective only at close range, Perry himself early in the action set the example for close fighting by steering, with the *Lawrence* and the two leading schooners, *Ariel* and *Scorpion,* a course oblique to the enemy, called bow and quarter line. At the moment of changing course, he signaled to Elliott and the rear ships, straggling behind in the light wind, to close up. By reason of Elliott's misunderstanding of orders or by his lack of judgment and initiative, an ever widening gap now grew between Perry's van and rear ships. Therefore, for two and a half hours the *Lawrence* and the two van schooners bore the brunt of the battle unsupported.



THE BATTLE OF LAKE ERIE, SHOWING THE DECISIVE MANŒUVER OF THE *NIAGARA*

Adapted from a diagram of the battle by H. J. Fenton in the Department of English, U. S. Naval Academy.

Also, the *Queen Charlotte* left her natural antagonist, the *Niagara,* forged ahead, and so added her broadside to the *Detroit's* against the *Lawrence,* a local superiority of two big units against one. At the end of the first stage of the battle the *Lawrence* was a wreck, with four-fifths of her crew either dead or wounded. But the *Detroit,* too, according to Barclay, was "a perfect wreck." At the end of this first phase, Perry, assisted by the purser and the chaplain, fired the last gun from the hulk that had shown herself so worthy of the name of the brave Lawrence.

Leaving her flag still flying and letting her drift astern out of action, Perry put her in charge of a subordinate and made his memorable trip in a cutter to the *Niagara,* a fighting unit unscathed and fresh, and just at this time,

2:30 P. M., entering the theater of close action. Here began the second phase of the battle. Perry, sending Elliott to hurry along the rearward schooners, himself took the *Niagara,* as he had previously done the *Lawrence,* into close action in true Nelsonian fashion. The odds were now all in his favor. The *Detroit* and the *Queen Charlotte,* handicapped by the death of her able commander, were trying to wear to bring fresh broadsides to bear, but with almost all their braces and bowlines shot away the manœuver was badly executed and the two vessels fouled each other. While they were in this predicament, Perry came up with his new flotilla headed by the *Niagara.* He sailed through the enemy's battered line, in passing fired his port broadside into the enemy's schooners, and with his starboard battery raked the fouled *Detroit* and *Queen Charlotte.* At such close range the 32-pounder carronades of the *Niagara* did great execution. The second part of the battle was thus short and decisive. Perry now transferred his broad pennant back to the *Lawrence,* that he might receive the surrender of the enemy on her decks. Lawrence's namesake on Lake Erie had tried hard to live up to his dying behest four months previously, "Don't give up the ship."

After this battle another but different sort of battle was fought out for years by the two principals on the American side, Perry and Elliott. As on some other occasions, the brilliant victory was marred by a battle of words as to the respective merits or demerits of the leaders. This controversy assumed such bitterness that the friends of the contestants took sides. The evidence is confusing, but from the point of view of the historian it seems difficult to explain why Elliott did not come to the aid of Perry until he saw his chief well-nigh crushed. Whether Elliott misunderstood or never received the signal to close up, he should at least have followed Perry's lead into close action, especially

as the *Niagara,* a sister ship of the *Lawrence,* had her entire battery, except two guns, of carronades, which were useful only at close range. The main point of Elliott's defense, —a defense into which Fenimore Cooper threw himself with fierce energy,—that he was keeping his position in the line behind the slow *Caledonia,* is untenable, because such keeping of position was a discarded principle of naval tactics that had lost many former battles for other nations. Elliott, if he had read anything of the still recent battles of Rodney and Nelson, should have known this. Besides, Perry's whole plan of formation showed plainly that he intended that Elliott in the *Niagara* should take as his immediate opponent the *Queen Charlotte.* By Elliott's failure to do so, the *Queen Charlotte* was enabled to close up with the *Detroit* and so help crush Perry's van in detail. And again, though the wind was light, it was not so light as to prevent the *Queen Charlotte,* for example, from keeping up with her consorts. Against Elliott's own statement regarding lack of wind it was in evidence that he had his main topsail sharp aback for a long time to keep from running into the *Caledonia.* Whether, therefore, it was lack of professional knowledge, or lack of judgment and initiative, Elliott's stubborn sticking to his place behind the *Caledonia* brought him into close action a couple of hours late, almost too late, for Perry was very nearly defeated when Elliott finally arrived.[1]

But apart from this tempest in a tea-pot, the battle of Lake Erie was a great victory for the American cause. It secured American communications, changed on the American left wing the defensive to the offensive, won back Detroit and Michigan, and led directly to the victory of the Thames, in which Tecumseh, the great leader of the Indians, was killed. This latter victory removed the threat of

[1] Mahan, *Sea Power in Its Relations to the War of 1812,* II. 83–89.

Indian warfare in the Northwest and prevented the formation of the Indian buffer state, which England was threatening to carve out of the American Northwest as a reward to her Indian allies. Besides, "For the first time an American fleet had met a British fleet and defeated it. . . . The charm of British invincibility had been broken in the great ship duels which made the names of Decatur, Bainbridge and Hull household words. To this list was now added the name of Perry, who was looked upon by the Americans as a hero of the same class as Nelson."[1] By Perry's victory, America's sea power regained what her armies had lost.

[1] Babcock, *Rise of American Nationality*, The American Nation Series, XIII. 124.

CHAPTER IX

LAKE CHAMPLAIN THE DECISIVE THEATER OF AMERICAN SEA POWER

WHILE Perry was making Lake Erie an American inland sea, and while Chauncey was playing a losing game with Yeo for supremacy on Lake Ontario, the "modest but lion-hearted Macdonough," as Fenimore Cooper called him, was preparing on Lake Champlain for a contest that more nearly than any other merited the word decisive. Commodore Thomas Macdonough, whose father had served as a major under Washington at the battle of Long Island, was born near Middletown, Delaware, December 31, 1783. A midshipman at sixteen, he had had by the time he reached twenty-one more stirring and practical professional experiences than most officers during their entire lives. He was one of Preble's school-boys and volunteered with such comrades as James Lawrence and Charles Morris for the burning of the *Philadelphia* under Decatur. Like Farragut he early knew responsibility and even as a mere lad had interesting and unusual experiences, as for example when he went ashore at Gibraltar, then a great base of British operations, to demand the return of some seamen impressed into the British service, or when on a later occasion he routed single-handed at dead of night some desperadoes at Messina. Between Macdonough and his immediate superior in the Tripolitan War, Decatur, there sprang up a warm friendship that lasted through life. Both were

kindred spirits. Chivalrous, with high ideals of honor, with similar magnetism in inspiring the confidence of their subordinates, both sought eagerly the post of greatest danger. A young Yale student, Joseph H. Dulles, who visited Commodore Macdonough at Plattsburg the Sunday before the great fight of the latter's life, has left us an intimate picture of the young officer. Dulles says:

> Macdonough was then thirty-one years of age, but seemingly several years younger, of a light and agile frame, easy and graceful in his manners, with an expressive countenance, remarkably placid. The confidence of his officers and men was unbounded, and such as great leaders only can secure. While awaiting the dinner hour he entered freely into conversation on religious services in the navy.

On this occasion Macdonough quoted these verses from the Epistle of St. James as peculiarly appropriate for the sailor: "He that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven by the wind," and "Behold the ships, though so great, are turned about by a very small helm."[1] These quotations, which emphasize the importance of resolution and of attention to details, bring out the two most striking qualities of the man who was to make the events on Champlain of the following Sunday, September 11, 1814, an object of respectful attention at the peace table at Ghent.

Late in the autumn of 1812, Macdonough took charge on Lake Champlain, a sheet of water which was to play in this war, as it had done nearly two score years before against the British invaders, a critically important rôle, yet its great strategical value seems to have been overlooked in the early part of the war by both sides. With Lake George and the Hudson River, Lake Champlain constituted a comparatively easy route against Montreal or New York.

[1] Rodney Macdonough, *Life of Commodore Thomas Macdonough*, p. 155.

These waterways, lying in United States territory, would have made the strategy for the Americans for an offensive against Montreal easy, especially as the United States had in 1812 a slight superiority of naval force on Lake Champlain to begin with. For the Americans had three sloops on the lake, while the British had only one. Unfortunately for the Americans, however, two of these sloops, the *Eagle* and the *Growler,* in chasing some row-galleys back to their British base near Isle aux Noix on the Richelieu River, were fired at from shore and captured. With his initial superiority now gone, Macdonough entered upon a race in building and manning ships like the competitive efforts on Lakes Erie and Ontario, a race in which both sides were handicapped especially by lack of seamen. British sailors found their merchantmen paid such high wages, and Americans were so lucratively engaged in privateers, that the lake commanders were at their wits' ends for sailors. This race in improvising a naval force on Lake Champlain lasted a year and ended in a draw.

As a result of the capture of the *Eagle* and the *Growler,* the British commanders, Everard and Pring, were free to raid the lake at Plattsburg and elsewhere during the season of 1813, and the next spring attempted to blockade the mouth of Otter Creek on the Vermont side, where, at Vergennes, Macdonough was building his flotilla. But despite hampered communications on the lake and lack of skilled men, the American commander launched on April 11, 1814, a small frigate of twenty-six guns, the *Saratoga,* whose timbers had been standing in the forest forty days before. By the end of May, Macdonough took his station half-way down the lake, at Plattsburg, with his whole force except the new brig *Eagle,* which was to be ready in good time. His flotilla now comprised the flag-ship *Saratoga,* the schooner *Ticonderoga,* the sloop *Preble,* and ten galleys. It

is curious to note that the *Ticonderoga,* which had been designed as a steamboat, was by reason of official lack of faith in Fulton's invention changed at the last moment to the old reliable fore-and-aft sailer. With this force Macdonough could now restore American communications on the lake, could release and convoy stores and troops—long shut up at Burlington—and could force the British to stay at their base at Isle aux Noix until the completion of their flotilla. The defensive became the offensive.

Meanwhile the British were completing their lake forces. On August 25, 1814, they launched the new 37-gun frigate *Confiance,* the same day that Sir George Prevost reported the reënforcements to his army in Canada as aggregating twenty-nine thousand regulars. Easier conditions in the great war in Europe during the summer of 1814 were releasing increasing forces for the war in America. On September 2d, Captain Downie, like the other lake commanders a young veteran and an officer with an excellent record, replaced Everard, whose temperament had not shown itself equal to the emergency on Lake Champlain. Downie's spirit put new energy into the completion and equipment of the British flotilla at Isle aux Noix. His force consisted of the *Confiance,* the *Linnet,* the *Chubb,* the *Finch,* and a dozen galleys and amounted to some 2400 tons against Macdonough's 2250 tons. The British historian James heaps up the figures to show that Macdonough had the superior force; on the other hand, Roosevelt in his "Naval War of 1812" meets these figures with keen analysis and a new array of figures. Incidentally he consigns James, who declared that Macdonough covered his falsehoods with pious expressions, to the Ananias Club. Despite all handicaps handed down to Downie by his inefficient predecessor it remains true that he had a big advantage in his long guns in the ratio of three to two and a still greater advantage in

the frigate *Confiance,* which under favorable conditions like the *Pike* on Ontario might well have been a match for Macdonough's whole squadron.[1] The great disadvantage under which Downie labored in the nine days between his assuming command and giving battle to the enemy was the continual nagging that he had to endure from Prevost, who was goading him, as he had previously goaded Barclay on Lake Erie, into premature action and subsequent disaster.

Prevost, Governor-General of Canada, much senior in rank and years to Downie, led in person eleven thousand of Wellington's Peninsular veterans, with which he intended to invade the United States by way of the west shore of Lake Champlain. He chose this shore deliberately, because he did not wish to alienate some Vermonters, whose loyalty was so lukewarm that they furnished a large part of the fresh beef for the British army. Indeed, so great was the illicit traffic that the roads on the eastern shore were "insufficient for the cattle pouring into Canada." In a letter to the Navy Department Macdonough complained of this disloyalty in these words, "The turpitude of many of our citizens in this part of the country furnishes the enemy with every information he wants."[2] Prevost then marched south along the west shore of the lake in close column without any attempt at caution,—e.g., by deployment,—for he was virtually unopposed. At the critical moment the American general Izard was ordered to retire to Sackett's Harbor. This left Macomb in command of a small brigade of two thousand effectives at Plattsburg, in whose harbor Macdonough was making careful preparations for battle. On his way to Plattsburg Prevost sent an army captain back to a lake port to keep an eye on Downie until the

[1] Mahan, *Sea Power in Its Relations to the War of 1812,* II. 371.

[2] Mahan, *Sea Power in Its Relations to the War of 1812,* II. 363–365.

latter got under way. Of course it was quite necessary for Prevost to have his left flank protected by Downie's flotilla, but a little less haste would have helped Downie immensely. The latter got his last reënforcement of seamen from the British fleet the day before the battle; thus many men were unknown to their officers on the critical day, and shipwrights were working on the *Confiance* en route to Plattsburg till within two hours of the battle. Prevost arrived at Plattsburg on September 6th, but made no attempt to cross the easily fordable Saranac, dislodge Macomb's small army, and thus drive Macdonough out into the lake, as he had by implication informed Downie he would do. Had he attacked Macomb instead of leaning so heavily on Downie, he would have destroyed the American military and naval forces in detail. Had Prevost driven Macdonough out into the open lake, he would have deprived Macdonough of the very carefully planned disposition of the American flotilla, a disposition which went far toward counterbalancing Downie's preponderance in long guns and tonnage.

In this placing of his squadron Macdonough in a most skilful manner supplemented the natural advantages of Plattsburgh Bay by careful use of every device of tactics and seamanship that might contribute in any way to success. He anchored his flotilla in line northeast and southwest across the entrance of the bay, his stronger ships close to Cumberland Head to the north,—that is, to windward. Lake Champlain, long and narrow, has its prevailing winds north and south and its current northward. Downie's ships, flat and of shallow draft, could not beat to windward, and would necessarily wait for a favorable, that is, northerly breeze. Hence Macdonough's formation was such that Downie would have to come to close quarters nearly

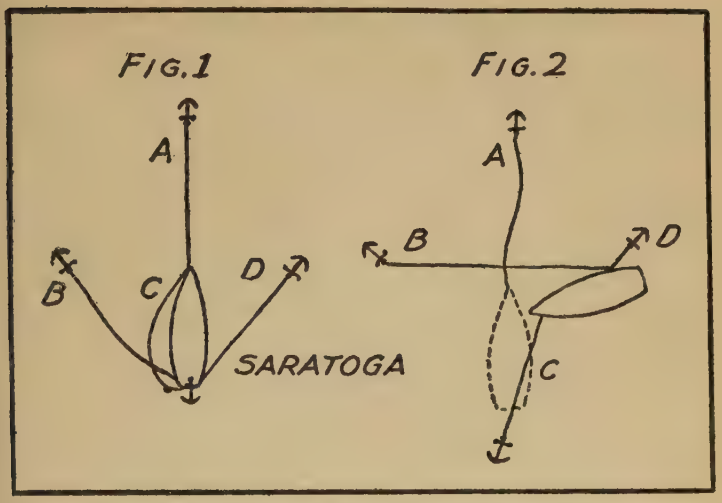
bows on and into the wind, a most exposed and dangerous position for attack. Furthermore, Macdonough had provided his units, especially the *Saratoga,* with a system of extra anchors and hawsers, called springs, so arranged that the ship could be turned completely around and present a fresh broadside to the enemy. Inshore of his main column—which consisted of the *Eagle, Saratoga, Ticonderoga* and *Preble* respectively from north to south—he drew up his galleys under sweeps to support the smaller units at the southern end of his line. Macdonough's line, extending from shoal to shoal and aided by shore batteries, would prevent any attempt of the enemy to double his flanks. By his skilful planning Macdonough had arranged for a battle on his own terms. A jury in a war college would have declared the American commander the victor before either side fired a shot.

Early on the fine Sunday morning of September 11, 1814, the Americans looking across Cumberland Head, could see the British standing south before a fair wind. On reaching Cumberland Head, Downie, who had arranged his formation in accord with Macdonough's line, hove to to wait for his galleys. At nine o'clock he approached in line abreast, intending to anchor the *Linnet* and the *Chubb* off the *Eagle* in the van of the American line, the *Confiance* off the *Saratoga,* and the *Finch* off the *Ticonderoga.* In accord with Downie's plan the *Linnet* came to anchor in her intended position and poured a diagonal fire upon the *Eagle* at such close quarters that the latter finally cut her cables and took refuge behind the *Saratoga.* The British *Chubb,* however, rendered unmanageable by the American fire, failed to make her assigned position and drifted behind the American lines out of action. Downie, perhaps imitating the example of his old commander, Nelson, at the battle of

the Nile, evidently intended to destroy Macdonough's line in detail by concentrating a local superiority of force on the American van.

As the British were approaching, Macdonough, a very devout man, knelt with his officers on the quarter-deck for a few moments' prayer. Then after some words of encouragement to officers and men he led them by his example into action by aiming very coolly and deliberately one of the 24-pounders. At this moment a shot from the *Linnet,* striking a chicken coop on board the *Saratoga,* released a cock, which, flying on top of a gun-slide, gave forth a lusty crow. The sailors laughed and cheered the bird of good omen just as Macdonough fired the gun he had been aiming. The shot ranged the length of the deck of the *Confiance,* then still about a third of a mile away, and did great damage. Under the harassing fire of the *Saratoga,* Downie was compelled to anchor farther away than he had intended. With much difficulty and great perseverance he finally brought the *Confiance* broadside on to the *Saratoga.* Then, having first made everything secure, he, like Macdonough, aimed the first gun himself and so let loose a broadside which is said to have killed or wounded one-fifth of the *Saratoga's* crew. Despite the untrained crews on both sides, who in their excitement made such mistakes as ramming home shot without powder, the fire at the head of the line with virtually stationary platforms on a calm sea at point-blank range was terribly destructive. Downie was killed early in the action, and Macdonough was bowled over twice, but picked himself up immediately, in both instances unhurt.

The decisive and unique feature of this battle was Macdonough's winding of the *Saratoga* by means of the springs he had provided. This gave him a new broadside and virtually a new ship. Later, Robertson, Downie's succes-



MACDONOUGH'S METHOD OF WINDING SHIP

In preparing for action, Macdonough planted a kedge anchor off each bow, with a line leading to the quarter, and hung a stream anchor over the stern. At the critical period of the engagement, the stream anchor was let go, with a line (C) from its ring to the port bow, and the bower cable (A) cut. The stern was hauled over to the kedge on the starboard hand (D), and the line from the other kedge (B) dipped and brought in on the starboard quarter. With this line from the starboard quarter and the line from the port bow to the stream anchor, the *Saratoga* was sprung entirely around and her new broadside brought to bear. This manœuver decided the engagement. (Adapted from Knight's *Seamanship*, by permission of the author.)

sor, tried to imitate Macdonough's manœuver by means of improvised springs. In his attempts he succeeded only in getting the *Confiance* half-way around and so exposed her to the raking of the *Saratoga* and the *Eagle*. With his hold full of water and a crew opposed to further fighting, Robertson struck his colors. Macdonough at once swung around to bring his full broadside to bear upon the *Linnet*, and in a quarter of an hour he compelled the latter also to surrender. So ended the only serious phase of the battle, at the head of Macdonough's line.

At the southern end the British with the *Finch* and their

galleys made a desperate effort to turn the Americans' flank. The *Finch* failed to keep near enough to the wind to make the position assigned to her abreast the *Ticonderoga;* even with the aid of sweeps she could not regain the lost ground. She was forced out of the action by a couple of well-directed broadsides from the *Ticonderoga.* Lieutenant Cassin of the *Ticonderoga,* first with long guns and then with canister at close quarters, scattered the British galleys, four of which offered a desperate resistance. The row-galleys on both sides were too small and vulnerable to affect the outcome of the battle.

From start to finish, in an action that lasted nearly two and a half hours, it was for the Americans a desperate fight. The *Saratoga* was hulled fifty-five times and the *Confiance* one hundred and five times. The American flag-ship lost approximately 50 in killed and wounded out of a crew of 210, while the losses on the *Confiance* amounted to at least 100 out of a total crew of 270. The battle illustrated the sole advantage of the defensive,—the careful choice of the battle-ground and skilful preparation for every contingency. Thus the defender of fortress or fleet forces an opponent to fight in his own territory and on his own terms. To Macdonough is due the credit for his foresight in making a wise use of the defensive. Of him Roosevelt, in his "Naval War of 1812," says, "His skill, seamanship, quick eye, readiness of resource, and indomitable pluck, are beyond all praise."

The immediate result of this victory on Lake Champlain was the precipitate retreat to Canada of Prevost and his magnificent army. For this retreat and for his previous failure to support Downie he was later, at the instance of Yeo, court-martialed, but he died before his trial. Yet we have the words of no less a strategist than the great Wellington himself that the invasion of the United States

was impossible without control of the waterways. After the first fall of Napoleon the British Ministry considered British defeat in Canada so dangerous to their nation's interests in Europe that they urged Wellington to assume the command in Canada and retrieve the disaster. But he replied:

> Neither I nor any one else can achieve success, in the way of conquests, unless you have naval superiority on the lakes. Till that superiority is acquired, it is impossible, according to my notion, to maintain an army in such a situation as to keep the enemy out of the whole frontier, much less to make any conquest from the enemy. . . . The question is, whether we can obtain this naval superiority on the lakes. If we cannot, I shall do you little good in America; and I shall go there only to prove the truth of Prevost's defense, and to sign a peace which might as well be signed now.[1]

Wellington, the contemporary of Nelson, knew from much experience that sea power dominates land power. It can give or take away, by control alike of high seas or Great Lakes, the offensive. This control of a strategic waterway and the resulting vital effect on the whole Canadian military situation is Macdonough's achievement. The desperate defensive on the American right wing Macdonough had by one stroke changed to a victorious offensive. In the words of Professor Babcock, "It would seem as though the persistent mismanagement of the American forces in northern New York, the incompetency of Dearborn and Wilkinson, the strange interference of Secretary [of War] Armstrong, the diversion of the forces of Izard from the front of Prevost's army, were all atoned for by the brilliancy of the accomplishment of Commodore Macdonough and his handful of sailors and soldiers on Lake Cham-

[1] Castlereagh Letters, Series III. Vol. II. 203. Quoted by Mahan, *Sea Power in Its Relations to the War of 1812*, II. 430.

plain."[1] "Down to the time of the Civil War," declares Theodore Roosevelt, "Macdonough is the greatest figure in our naval history."

But Macdonough's victory had other more important if remoter results. The Treaty of Ghent—on which all subsequent battles on land or sea, such as the battle of New Orleans and the fight of the *President* and the victory of the *Constitution* over the *Cyane* and the *Levant,* were without effect—was the result of a year's deliberation. The Russian Czar in the first year of the war had made offers of mediation which finally culminated in a counter-suggestion from Castlereagh for direct negotiations for peace. This suggestion was accepted on January 5, 1814, by the United States, and Ghent was selected as the meeting place for the plenipotentiaries. During the year there were long periods of deadlock. Britain would not back down on impressment and on her seizures of shipping under the Orders in Council. On the other hand, the United States would consent neither to the surrender of the Northwest as an Indian state, nor to the recognition of the Great Lakes as exclusively under the sovereignty of Great Britain, nor to the cession of a large part of Maine to "rectify" British frontiers. These extreme demands on both sides gradually gave way to more moderate counsels. To this result the delicate situation in Europe and the victories of Perry and Macdonough contributed most. Napoleon was on the island of Elba dangerously near France, which was ready for a new revolution against Louis XVIII; moreover, the Allies, gathered at the memorable Congress of Vienna, were intensely jealous of one another and looked askance at England's designs on Maine and Louisiana. With these European influences on the peace negotiations at Ghent,

[1] Babcock, *Rise of American Nationality,* American Nation Series, XIII, 127.

Macdonough's victory had a cumulative effect toward forcing the British to relinquish a peace of conquest.

The treaty, therefore, while forcing England to give up conquered territory, passed over in silence the great issues on which the war had been started,—impressment and seizures under the irregular blockades. Of these two issues, the former was dead beyond recall; the latter was destined to survive for another century. But while the war therefore ended without material results for either side, to Americans it was fraught with deep spiritual meaning. To them it was a second war of independence; it reawakened a love of the Union, an intense spirit of patriotism. Under its growing commerce and wealth the new republic had been endangered for a time by materialistic and sectional interests. Britain again and again during the war had banked on sectionalism and had hoped to split the Union in two. This rebirth of the love for country was due in no small degree to the remarkable achievements of American sea power, brought to a decisive climax by Macdonough on Lake Champlain.

CHAPTER X

DECATUR THE POPULAR IDOL OF SEA POWER

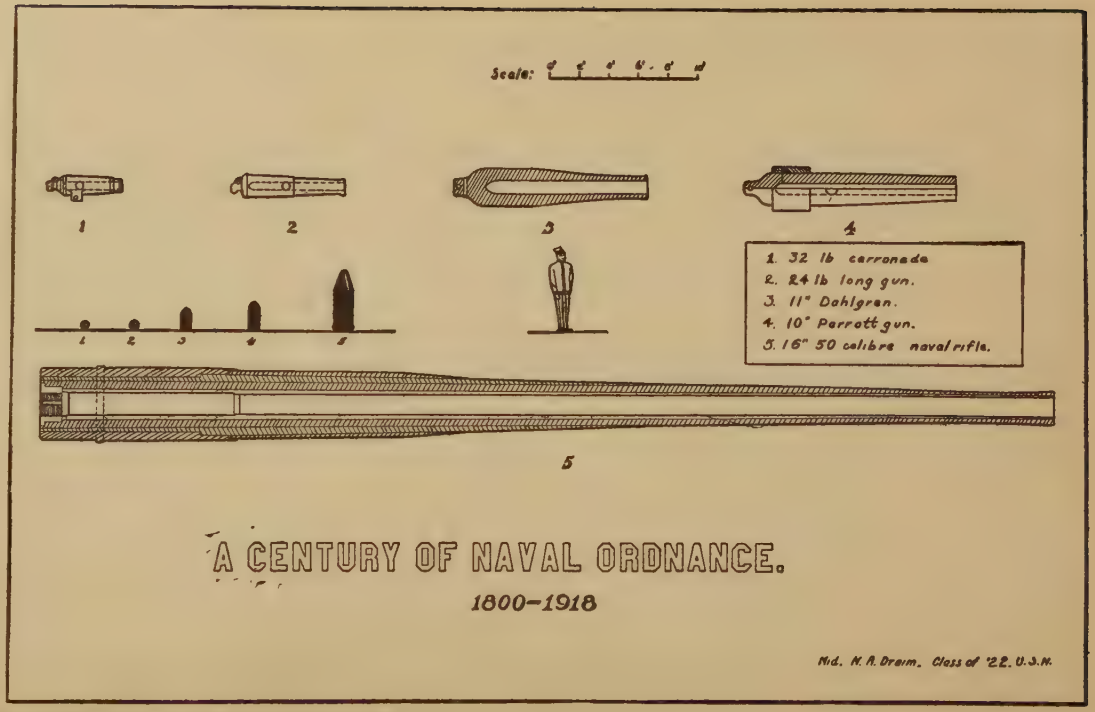
WHILE Macdonough was the decisive instrument of the sea power of the new country, we must seek elsewhere for the popular idol of American achievement upon the seas. This hero, around whose name has been woven ever since all the romance of the sea; this Nelson of his day without the opportunities of a Nelson; this popular hero was and still is Stephen Decatur. His personal gallantry in the Tripolitan War, his chivalrous spirit, and his flame-pure patriotism mark him as kin to the great hero of British sea power. Around his name were formed many of the finest traditions of the American service. To him "we may ascribe in no small degree that heroic tone which has marked all the after achievements of our navy."[1]

In even greater degree than was true of Nelson, who commanded conscript seamen during most of his days, was Decatur the idol of the enlisted men and his subordinates in the volunteer naval forces of the New World. His attitude toward his men was strikingly like Nelson's. At a time when discipline in both navies was maintained by the free use of the cat, both Nelson and Decatur had to a singular degree " the happy art of governing sailors rather by their affections than their fears." The devotion of their men was such that the latter were willing even to sacrifice their lives for their officers. Thus we find the sailor, Reu-

[1] Mackenzie, *Life of Decatur*, p. 96.

ben James,[1] in the fierce hand-to-hand encounter during the boat attack at Tripoli, himself severely wounded, interposing his head to ward off the saber-blow meant for Decatur,—just as John Sykes, Nelson's coxswain, in a similar hand-to-hand encounter in a boat attack off Cadiz, had saved Nelson's life. Nor was this devotion all on one side. Both Nelson and Decatur took the deepest interest in their subordinates and manifested a jealous and sympathetic alertness in securing their comfort and their rights. As Nelson refused honors if they were not bestowed impartially on his officers and men, as he dashed at imminent risk to self and ship back into a squadron of the enemy to save Hardy, so Decatur showed a similar watchfulness over his subordinates. On one occasion when an officer had kicked a sailor in the face for some misunderstanding of orders, the man, indignant at the outrage, appeared at once on the quarter-deck before Decatur. The latter—of a naturally hot temper seldom revealed to others except by a flash from his fine eyes—for an instant lost control of himself. He felt the insult to the man as if it had been personal, and berated the officer publicly in so violent and humiliating a manner as to make an indelible impression upon the whole ship's company. On another occasion Decatur learned of a duel arranged at Malta between a British officer and Midshipman Joseph Bainbridge, who as a result of one of those sneering remarks about Yankee cowards then in style among young British officers had been challenged to fight by an expert shot. Decatur at once insisted on substituting himself as Bainbridge's second. He kept the duelists—who were only four yards apart—with weapons extended until he noticed that the Englishman's hand became unsteady. Then Decatur gave

[1] For the dispute as to whether it was Reuben James or Daniel Fraser, see Mackenzie, *Life of Decatur*, p. 363.



A CENTURY OF NAVAL ORDNANCE.

1800–1918

Mid. N. A. Dreim. Class of '22. U.S.N.

the order to fire and both men missed. Their honor was satisfied, but Decatur had saved the young midshipman's life. The Englishman happened to be the private secretary of Sir Alexander Ball, the Governor of Malta and an intimate friend of Nelson. This contact between Nelson's and Preble's officers left its impression upon Decatur. Consciously or unconsciously, Decatur patterned himself after Nelson, whose officers in a very literal sense worshiped their commander as the genius of British sea power.

Like Nelson, too, Decatur was in the appeal of his personality, his chivalrous bearing, and his romantic charm for women. Decatur's slender and athletic figure, his military bearing, his striking features, and his fine eyes marked him as unusual in any company. After his detachment from the Mediterranean squadron, he landed at Norfolk, where he met in an official capacity the Mayor of Norfolk and the latter's beautiful daughter, Susan Wheeler. She and her girl friends had been previously admiring in the cabin of the war-ship a miniature by an Italian artist of the handsome hero. Decatur's marriage to Miss Wheeler, which took place on March 8, 1806, when he was twenty-seven years of age, was destined to be unusually happy. Though his bent was naturally rather toward action than books, he took a deep and sympathetic interest in Mrs. Decatur's love of music, poetry, and especially Italian art, for which his Mediterranean experiences had given him a taste. Henceforth, in his victories as in the crises of his life, Decatur's first and last thought was for his wife. With fine chivalry he attempted to shield her from the pain of the frequent separations and sorrows that were to befall them. On October 30, 1812, the same day that he wrote his official report to the Secretary of the Navy on the capture of the *Macedonian,* he wrote another letter, in very different tone, to his wife. This letter, in-

tended only for Mrs. Decatur, was published many years later with her permission. As an intimate glimpse of Decatur's character it is quoted here in full:

Frigate, *United States*,
At Sea, October 30, 1812.

My Beloved Susan,

I have had the good fortune to capture H. B. M.'s frigate *Macedonian*, Captain Carden, by which I have gained a small sprig of laurel, which I shall hasten to lay at your feet. I tried burning [the *Philadelphia*] on a former occasion, which might do for a very young man; but now that I have a precious little wife, I wish to have something more substantial to offer, in case she should become weary of love and glory.

One half of the satisfaction arising from this victory is destroyed in seeing the distress of poor Carden, who deserved success as much as we did, who had the good fortune to obtain it. I do all I can to console him.

Do not be anxious about me, my beloved. I shall soon press you to my heart.

Your devoted,

S. Decatur.[1]

A severe test for Decatur as the popular hero of the sea came with his loss of the frigate *President* to the British blockading squadron off New York in January, 1815. After the battle, Decatur, wounded and exhausted by a thirty-hour chase in a violent northwester, went below to the cockpit to have his wounds dressed. Here he insisted on waiting his turn on the surgeon's table, as Nelson after the battle of the Nile on a similar errand had remarked, "I will take my turn with my brave lads." Then Decatur donned his full uniform preparatory to repairing at three o'clock in the morning in wintry seas to the British flag-ship to give up his sword to the British squadron commander. A captive of war now, he was taken to Bermuda but was later

[1] Mackenzie, *Life of Decatur*, p. 371.

brought back to New London, where he arrived on February 21, 1815, a few days after the ratification of the treaty of peace by the United States Senate. The next morning the enthusiastic inhabitants came down to the landing and drew Decatur's carriage to his house, celebrating at once the return of peace and of the popular idol. As his biographer says, Decatur, "conquered, yet conquering, was still triumphant in the hearts of his countrymen." Nor was Decatur, despite his defeat, less of a hero in the eyes of the Government than of the people. For two weeks after the promulgation of peace, the Government declared war against Algiers and chose Decatur to command a squadron. As we have seen, Decatur brought the corsairs to terms within forty days after leaving the United States. This service was a fitting climax to his earlier work in the Mediterranean. If Nelson by sea power defeated Napoleon, Decatur achieved in the Mediterranean what even the sea power of Great Britain had not been able to achieve in two hundred and fifty years,—the end of piracy in that sea which had been so peculiarly the theater of great British naval victories.

On his return to New York, November 18, 1815, Decatur received at once new laurels from his countrymen as their idol of the sea. President Madison on the assembling of Congress in December highly complimented Decatur on his speedy termination of his mission. Congress later voted him and his crew $100,000 prize money for the capture of Algerine ships. He and Commodores Rodgers and Porter were chosen the three Commissioners of the Navy, who in those days under the Secretary of the Navy managed the whole business of naval supply and operation. En route to his new post in January, 1816, and on his later trips to navy-yards, Decatur was everywhere toasted and hailed by admiring countrymen for his

achievements. On one such occasion in Baltimore he replied to a toast in these words, "The citizens of Baltimore: Their patriotism and valor defeated the veteran forces of the enemy, who came, saw, and fled." And it was in Norfolk in answer to the toast, "The Mediterranean, the sea not more of Greek and Roman than of American glory," that he gave the famous response, "Our Country! In her intercourse with foreign nations may she always be in the right; but our country, right or wrong."

The toast may be said to strike the key-note of Decatur's character,—his intense love of country. Herein again he is like Nelson, with whom patriotism was a passion. Nelson in the great crises of his life asked himself, What is England's need at this moment? What would my country have me do? It was at these crises that Nelson, in his zeal for the nation, disobeyed the orders of his commanding officers; as for example at Copenhagen, when he deliberately put the glass to his blind eye to take a look at the signal for retreat and quietly remarked, "I don't see the signal." With a zeal no less than Nelson's, Decatur subordinated every other interest to his country's. It is said that he remarked to his wife that only one other love would take precedence of his love for her,—that for his country. Decatur in a very real sense sacrificed himself to his high ideal of patriotic duty.

In his work as naval commissioner, Decatur had to settle many important questions of organization and policy of the young navy. It was in connection with this duty that a minor question came up for Decatur's decision, a question fraught with tragic fate for him personally. Much against his will, Decatur had been assigned a dozen years before to one of the unpleasantest duties that a naval officer must undergo,—the court martial of a brother of-

STEPHEN DECATUR

From the portrait by Chappel

DAVID PORTER

From the portrait by Chappel

ficer. Court martials have, like our jury system, much in their favor; yet in practice they seem at times to cause many hardships. As against his comrades, duty on a court martial is extremely unpleasant to the conscientious officer. Decatur found it so in the court on which he sat against James Barron, the officer who allowed his frigate, the *Chesapeake,* to be boarded by the British *Leopard* in 1807 for purposes of impressment. The court found Barron guilty of negligence in going to sea unprepared and sentenced him to suspension from duty for five years. Barron, who never forgave Decatur for the latter's part in the decision, applied to the naval commissioners for reinstatement. Decatur objected to such reinstatement on the ground that Barron had not offered his services to his country during the war of 1812. As Barron's period of suspension was up in 1813, his continued residence abroad was regarded by Decatur as desertion in time of war. His application for reinstatement now on a par with those who had endured all the dangers of an unequal contest seemed brazen. It was as if a slacker and deserter asked for a share of the glory.

As a result of disappointment Commodore Barron now began a lengthy correspondence with Decatur. In a remarkably and almost brutally frank letter in this correspondence, Decatur, while abjuring all personal feelings of animosity, explained at length his reasons for his decision. From this correspondence it is plain that Decatur was actuated by none but the highest motives of interest in service and country. Barron, however, was determined on settling the matter on "the field of honor,"—that is by a duel, to which Decatur's reply was: "If we fight, it must be of your seeking; and you must take all the risk and all the inconvenience, which usually attend the challenger in such cases." Decatur reminded Barron, in reply to the

latter's reiterated comments about his (Barron's) eyesight, that his own eyes had not improved with the years. But Decatur from a delicate sense of honor allowed, without protest, Jesse D. Elliott of Lake Erie fame, Barron's second, to dictate to Bainbridge, Decatur's second, the important condition that the fight should be at twelve paces. Decatur had told his intimates that he was not going to shoot to kill; he had no desire to injure Barron except in self-defense. On the morning of March 22, 1820, after a happy breakfast with Mrs. Decatur, to whom from motives of tender feeling he had given no inkling of the affair, he drove to the rendezvous near Bladensburg. Immediately after the command to fire, the pistols flashed and both men fell wounded to the ground, Decatur mortally, as the event proved.

We must remember in explanation of Decatur's action that dueling was, especially among men in public life, not yet under a ban, but quite the contrary. In England men like Wellington, Castlereagh, Fox, Pitt, Sheridan, Canning, Hastings, and O'Connell, and in America, Charles Lee, Burr, Hamilton, Clay, John Randolph, and DeWitt Clinton had fought or were to fight duels. In the American Navy the "honor code" was virtually unescapable. As we have seen, it was applied even to ship combats. The gallant Richard Somers—with Decatur at Tripoli—is said to have fought three duels in one day. Decatur had himself been principal or second in a number of affairs; in fact, he acted as second for Commodore Perry, of Lake Erie, in the latter's duel with Heath, in which Perry deliberately refused to fire his pistol. With this example in his mind, Decatur had intended not to return Barron's fire and he would not have done so, if Barron had not insisted on the shortest distance allowed by the "code of honor." As it was, Decatur aimed low, to wound without killing Barron.

It is a sad reflection that the glorious work of the navy during the War of 1812 was spoiled by much hard feeling after the war, of which the controversy between Perry and Elliott and the Barron-Decatur duel were striking illustrations. As Decatur was carried off the field at Bladensburg, he remarked, "I am mortally wounded; at least, I believe so, and wish I had fallen in defense of my country." He was taken to his home in Washington, where he soon after died, a victim to his high sense of honor and duty. From the President, the Cabinet, and Congress, who attended the funeral, to the humblest citizen, the nation mourned its hero of two wars, "the Bayard of the Sea."

CHAPTER XI

DAVID PORTER—THE PERSONIFICATION OF AMERICANISM AT SEA

THE stirring events which marked the history of England and America from 1763 to 1815, from the close of the Seven Years' War to the downfall of Napoleon at Waterloo, produced no greater changes in the political complexion of the American colonies than they did in the social and intellectual life of the inhabitants. The typical Colonial of 1763, of the days even of the Stamp Act, was a totally different person from the American of the end of the War of 1812. The purely English bent toward conventionality and conservatism of even so great a man as Washington was in utter contrast with the nervous, uncouth, boastful, individualistic Americanism of Andrew Jackson. Yet the latter was almost as representative of the dominating forces in American life in the second and third decades of the nineteenth century as Washington was of the previous century in its last quarter. The American had been transformed and recreated; he had been reborn from aristocracy into democracy.

When we seek the causes of this remarkable metamorphosis in American character, a metamorphosis which has, despite many economic and intellectual changes, persisted in the typical American, we find the usual view to be that the influence of the West was the greatest factor. In the words of Professor Turner, perhaps the best exponent of

this theory, "American democracy is fundamentally the outcome of the experiences of the American people in dealing with the West."[1] Without excluding this influence, and without forgetting the tremendous effect of the whole movement toward man's political and intellectual emancipation which we call the French Revolution, it is pertinent to inquire whether in American life the influence of American experience on the sea, especially in the stirring years of the Revolution, the Napoleonic Wars, and the War of 1812, did not play a significant part in forming in Americans a new spirit of nationality and democracy.

Simply recall the spirit and achievements of the colonial American whaler, as portrayed so vividly by Edmund Burke; add only the fact that during the Revolution and the War of 1812 privateering absorbed the energy of a very considerable part of American manhood. Then one realizes that there were in existence factors which could turn the American type from the steady colonial landsman into the aggressive Western pioneer. When one realizes that during all this period the sea was more unsafe than the Western wilderness, unsafe always because of the uncertainty and wildness of Nature herself, and unsafe moreover because of the frequent wars, the privateers, the pirates, the jealousy of England, and the greed of Napoleon, one has to acknowledge that here were elements which needed only to be utilized to produce the sturdy, self-reliant, independent, masterful, and, it must be admitted, boastful, violent, and impetuous individual that came to represent America in European thought in the first half of the last century.

Indeed, when one compares a typical seaman of the time with a typical Western pioneer the likenesses in temperament and character are startling. Two such men were

[1] *Atlantic Monthly*, January, 1903, p. 94.

David Porter, commander of the *Essex* in its brilliant cruise against the British whaling-fleet in the South Pacific, and Andrew Jackson, the hero of New Orleans and the first Westerner to seat himself in the Presidential chair. Forcefulness of character was the central trait in both, and this trait manifested itself early in both men, and independence of action marked their respective careers, naval and military, independence so great that it carried both beyond the instructions of their governments and even beyond the letter of international law. In both appeared that directness of action which went straight to the heart of a difficulty and accomplished the result desired. Both were violent in disposition and frequently engaged in personal quarrels with their associates and opponents. They were alike in their uncompromising hatred of all foreign enemies of their country; both were jealously watchful not only of the material interests of the nation but still more of her honor as a sovereign power.

Porter, Boston-born and Baltimore-bred, was early at sea, undergoing in 1796 as a mere lad of sixteen a baptism of blood in repelling a British press-gang from his father's ship. In later voyages as a merchant sailor he showed his spirit by refusing to obey British orders when he was himself taken on board a British frigate for impressment. When, just before the naval war with France, he became, according to his own claims, the first midshipman to be enrolled in the regular navy, he soon distinguished himself in the engagement between the *Constellation* and the *Insurgente*. Afterward, as first lieutenant of a smaller vessel, he forced his faint-hearted captain to keep on fighting instead of surrendering to a swarm of pirates.

In his social life he showed the same forcefulness. The story is that when he won the hand of the lady who afterward became his wife it was after only a very brief court-

ship. Soon he traveled to Chester, Pennsylvania, to secure her father's consent. When he arrived he was received by her brother and informed in an icy tone that he could not see the father and had come on a fool's errand anyway if he hoped to marry the daughter. Porter replied: "I came here about marrying your sister; I did n't come to marry you, and, d—n you, if you don't leave the room I 'll throw you out of the window." [1] So effective was the threat that he married the lady presently and received an attractive house at Chester as a wedding-present from her father.

Against the British, with whom he had many scores to settle, he was equally violent, and his feelings during the vexatious years of the Napoleonic Wars, with their trade restrictions, embargoes, and impressments, are seen in the following, written to an intimate friend in 1810:

> There are some things dearer to a nation than the wealth of its citizens on shore or on the ocean, and that is its honor, and when we fail to esteem that in advance of all else, we will stand poor indeed in the world's estimation.[2]

Soon afterward he offered his resignation from the navy, but fortunately the Secretary of the Navy prevailed on him to withdraw it and remain in the service.

When Porter sailed for the South Atlantic in 1812 in command of the small frigate *Essex,* there came the decisive moment of his life. Prevented from making the prearranged junction with Commodore Bainbridge off the coast of Brazil, and seeing little chance of effective service in those waters, he boldly decided to carry out a plan which he had previously discussed with his superior, namely, to cut loose from all bases, round the Horn, sweep down upon

[1] D. D. Porter, *Memoir of Commodore David Porter,* p. 71.
[2] D. D. Porter, *Memoir of Commodore David Porter,* p. 82.

PORTER'S CRUISE IN THE *ESSEX*

the British whaling-fleets off the South American coast, especially in the vicinity of the Galapagos Islands, and exist as best he could on the supplies of his captures. No man who had not self-reliance and an utter contempt for the chance of disaster to his reputation in thus departing from his official orders, would have done as Porter did. But he acted in full accord with the note of independence and individualism which sounded through his whole career.

Putting his men on short rations, Porter beat his laborious way around the desolate Horn in almost the worst weather of the year. Refitting in the friendly port of Val-

paraiso, he quickly sailed to the north, and like a bolt from a clear sky fell upon the British whaling-fleets, capturing vessel after vessel, and delivering blows which for decades all but annihilated British enterprise in that section. As he needed to make extensive repairs to his ship, he sailed with his fleet of prizes to the Marquesas Islands, where, in the romantic and Eden-like environment of the South Seas, he refitted his vessels and even annexed the islands to the United States. In justification of this act he issued a proclamation which breathes the very spirit of the Declaration of Independence. The document announces, after making the formal proclamation of annexation:

> Our rights to this island, being founded on priority of discovery, conquest and possession, cannot be disputed. But the natives, to secure to themselves that friendly protection which their defenseless situation so much required, have requested to be admitted into the great American family, whose pure republican policy approaches so near their own. And in order to encourage these views to their own interest and happiness, as well as to render secure our claim to an island valuable on many considerations, I have taken on myself to promise them that they shall be so adopted; that our chief shall be their chief; and they have given assurances that such of their brethren as may hereafter visit them from the United States, shall enjoy a welcome and hospitable reception among them, and be furnished with whatever refreshments and supplies the island may afford, and that they will protect them against all their enemies, and, as far as lies in their power, prevent the subjects of Great Britain (knowing them to be such) from coming among them until peace shall take place between the two nations.[1]

In his disastrous engagement with the British ships *Phœbe* and *Cherub* on his return to Valparaiso in 1814, Porter showed the typically American qualities of independence, aggressiveness, and pluck. When the *Phœbe*,

[1] *Porter's Journal*, II. 79.

a frigate fully the equal of the *Essex* and superior in long-range guns, entered the harbor and came sailing down on the *Essex* as if to come alongside and attack, even in a neutral port, Porter shouted to Hillyar, the British commander, "If you touch a rope yarn of this ship, I shall board instantly."[1] He later challenged the *Phœbe* to a duel outside the harbor. But the British with their two ships waited their chance, and found it when the *Essex,* having slipped outside to draw the *Phœbe* out, became disabled by the loss of a topmast and put back into neutral waters. Here Porter was attacked by both Britishers and obliged to surrender. But he did this only after a heroic resistance in which he lost nearly two hundred men. Though the *Essex* had her sails partly disabled, and though the British vessels took positions where they could rake him with impunity, Porter several times made enough sail, or turned his ship by cables, so that he could bring his carronades to bear and inflict injury on the enemy.

By taking risks and assuming responsibility, even though he must have foreseen the inevitable, fatal outcome, Porter dealt Great Britain a blow which did much to put her in a receptive mood for peace. The damage to the whaling industry was about six million dollars,—and the expenses to the American Government were only the loss of the *Essex* herself, originally built for the French war by the citizens of Salem at their own cost.

Porter's independence of action and impatience of restraint, as well as his strong hatred of British arrogance on the sea, were further shown on his return to America under a cartel signed with Captain Hillyar. By this the men of the *Essex* were to be free to return to the United States but were not to take part in the war

[1] Loyall Farragut, *Life of David Glasgow Farragut,* p. 33 (quoted from *Farragut's Journal).*

again. Stopped off New York by a British blockading frigate, whose captain refused to recognize Hillyar's arrangement, Porter, impatient at such obstruction, decided he had a right to escape. He first wrote a letter to the British commander, in which he stated that most British naval officers were not only destitute of honor themselves but regardless of the honor of those of their fellow officers who possessed it. Then, getting into one of the ship's boats, manned by some of his men, he sailed off in the friendly fog for Long Island, sixty miles away. When he managed to land safely and establish his identity, he was enthusiastically welcomed in New York and Philadelphia. Soon afterward he assisted in energizing the defense of Baltimore and Washington when they were attacked by Admiral Cockburn. Thus he vindicated his honor and illustrated the sentiment he expressed at the beginning of the war, when, referring to enemies in the Navy Department, he wrote to an intimate friend, "I intend that no one shall treat me badly with impunity."

The strange parallel between Porter and Andrew Jackson appeared most prominently when Porter was sent to the West Indies in 1823 to command an expedition against the pirates who infested the waters of Cuba, Haiti, and Porto Rico and despoiled American merchantmen in the extensive trade they carried on there. The revolutionary movements against Spain that marked that decade among her American colonies gave admirable opportunities for piratical enterprise, and the weakness and corruption of the Spanish officials made suppression of such piracy a difficult task. Porter went at it with such directness that when a subordinate officer of his squadron was insulted and imprisoned for a few hours by the Spanish mayor at Foxardo, Porto Rico, he sailed into the harbor of the town,

landed a few men, spiked the guns of the Spanish fortifications, and quickly secured an abject apology. But as he had committed a hostile act against a nation with which the United States was at peace, he was peremptorily recalled from the West Indies, deprived of his command, and tried by court martial for disobedience of orders. Spain never protested against the slight to her sovereignty; political and personal reasons were probably at the bottom of the affair. Porter was so incensed that early in the sessions of the court he could not contain himself and made his feelings so evident in his written communications that the court ordered that all letters should first be submitted to the judge-advocate. This roused Porter's temper to such a point that he quitted the tribunal and let the trial proceed without him. The result was six months' suspension from duty.

Porter, however, refused to resume his place in the navy and resigned his commission. He had done only what Jackson had done when he had invaded Florida, captured Spanish towns, and hanged Englishmen without authority from his Government or right in international law. In the latter case the Government, while disavowing the act, did not punish the culprit, and took full advantage of the results obtained, which were, as in Porter's case, eminently beneficial. Curiously enough, John Quincy Adams, the man who as Secretary of State defended Jackson, was President when Porter was cashiered for similar independence of action.

After resigning his commission Porter accepted a place as admiral in the Mexican Navy, and with inadequate forces at his disposal harassed Spanish commerce in the Gulf of Mexico. But he soon grew impatient of the demoralized conditions in Mexico, the political corruption and the material and other deficiencies of the service, and

returned to the United States as soon as Jackson entered the White House.

Though Porter had been insulted by President Adams on the very steps of the White House and in the presence of Lafayette himself, he was now received by Jackson in the most friendly fashion and was offered his old position in the navy. But he replied, "I would rather dig than associate with the men who sentenced me for upholding the honor of the flag."

"Right," said Jackson; "by the Eternal, you shall not either if I can help it; I would n't associate with them myself."[1]

This attitude Porter maintained consistently to his dying day, although his brother officers of the court martial had tried to soften their sentence with the statement that they ascribed the conduct of the accused "to an anxious disposition, on his part, to maintain the honor and advance the interest of the nation and of the service." His feeling seems to have been directed chiefly against two men, the president of the court, Captain James Barron, who had himself been suspended from the navy for five years for his failure to defend the *Chesapeake* against the *Leopard* in 1807—a court martial of which Porter had been a member —and Captain Jesse D. Elliott, Perry's second in command at Lake Erie. As for Elliott, Porter, in his outspoken manner, had expressed uncomplimentary views of his conduct in the duel between Barron and Decatur. Such was Porter's bitterness toward Elliott that it persisted even when Porter had been appointed chargé d'affaires to Turkey,— a post created for him by President Jackson. When Elliott visited Constantinople in the *Constitution* Porter refused to have anything more than official intercourse with him. And he so notified Elliott in writing.

[1] D. D. Porter, *Memoir of Commodore David Porter*, p. 391.

Perhaps the sturdy Americanism of the hero of 1812 is more happily illustrated by his conduct on first reaching Turkey in 1831. Although the Turks required foreign war-vessels to dismount their guns before passing up the straits to Constantinople, Porter insisted that they should exempt the *John Adams,* in which he was being carried to his post, from such humiliation, and he gained his point, —an act that must have warmed the heart of Andrew Jackson.

In Porter's care and training of David Glasgow Farragut—whom he virtually adopted and who accompanied him in the *Essex* on her historic cruise, though the latter was but eleven years of age—is seen a tenderer element. That it persisted to the very end is seen by the following letter, written only eight years before his death:

St. Stephano de Constantinople, June 20, 1835.

My dear Glasgow:

. . . . . .

My country has thus far taken care of me, and I hope by good conduct to merit what she has done, endeavoring to serve her to the utmost of my power. There was a time when there was nothing that I thought too daring to be attempted for her; but those times are past, and appear only as a confused and painful dream. A retrospect of the history of my life seems a highly colored romance, which I should be very loath to live over again; and it would not be believed if it were written. My sufferings in Mexico, the trials of fortitude I underwent, exceed belief; but now I am enjoying Elysium, compared to what I then suffered in body and mind.

But let it pass. They have left an impression on my mind that can never be effaced. I have been taught to admire a bold struggle with adversity as one of the most noble moral spectacles, and pride myself on acquitting myself with honor.

I could not serve that base, unprincipled nation; but they would not let me. But I left them without a stain on my character, which was not what others, under the same circumstances, would have done.

But where am I running to? It is time that I should stop. But before I finish my letter, my dear Glasgow, I must say that the next thing to be admired is a grateful heart; and I am sure that I have found in yours that treasure which should be so much prized. I have always endeavored to do good, solely for the sake of good. I have never looked for any other return than what my feelings gave me, and to find such sentiments of gratitude from you, after all others had forgotten that they had received any benefits from me, is truly refreshing to the feelings.

Accept, my dear Glasgow, my best wishes for your health and happiness, and believe me to be your sincere friend.

DAVID PORTER.

LIEUTENANT-COMMANDANT D. GLASGOW FARRAGUT,
U. S. NAVY.[1]

Though Porter spent the remainder of his life on the shores of the Bosphorus, only once revisiting the United States, and had little need to exhibit forcefulness of character, he can well be remembered not only as the gallant midshipman of the French war, the Tripolitan prisoner of 1803–5, the intrepid and successful raider of the second war of independence, and the American who did most to suppress maritime anarchy in the West Indies, but also as a brilliant example of the new Americanism. Throughout his career he exhibits that sturdy, independent, and unrestrained American spirit which in the years following the Revolution gradually developed within the American breast both from the unceasing struggle with the wilderness and the Indian and from the equally unceasing struggle with the perils of the sea and the selfish pressure of European sea power.

[1] Loyall Farragut, *Life of David Glasgow Farragut*, p. 121.

CHAPTER XII

SEA POWER AIDS NATIONAL EXPANSION

IT has already been suggested that the spirit with which the American seamen participated in the second war of independence was at heart the same as that which actuated the Western pioneer. But during the period from the War of 1812 to the Civil War, when the country was chiefly occupied with expansion toward the West and the sudden burst of American enterprise which followed the discovery of gold in California, the part played by sea power has generally been dismissed in a few words. Yet the activities of the American seaman were many and constant, and he played, if not the major, at least an important, part in making the United States a continental nation with one arm along the Atlantic and another reaching to the Pacific.

Though the Americans had vindicated their sovereignty by their resistance to the pressure of European powers, they were in the years after 1815, as they had been before 1812, inferior in armed strength at sea. At the outbreak of the war there had been only fourteen serviceable war-vessels in the navy, and no ships of over fifty-five guns. In 1823 the Secretary of the Navy reported sixteen men-of-war in commission, but only one a ship of the line. Six others and three frigates were available in case war came, and five ships of the line and five frigates were on the stocks,—a total of thirty-five vessels of at least twelve guns. In 1843 forty-seven vessels might be mustered, only

ten of which were ships of the line. In 1850 the numbers were only slightly greater, the chief addition being five steam frigates. By the outbreak of the Civil War, the ten ships of the line were unserviceable, and only forty-two vessels were in commission, with twenty-seven more available for emergencies. For the work which was set before the American Navy this was meager indeed, especially if it meant any determined opposition to Great Britain, whose navy was during the whole period overwhelming in comparison with that of other powers, and which was politically unhampered by alliances or understandings with other nations.

It was fortunate, therefore, that in respect to the most momentous issue of this period, the expansion of the United States and development of independent governments in the Central and South American countries, Great Britain aligned herself beside the United States. As a commercial power, England saw that her interests in the colonies of Spain which revolted in the first quarter of the nineteenth century lay not in their territory but in their trade. That trade—secured for her during the Napoleonic Wars by her supremacy at sea and by the break-up of the Spanish rule in Europe—needed to be guarded not so much against the United States as against Europe. It was for England's interest that no European government should seize infant South American republics, and close their ports to English trade and manufactures. When her foreign minister, Canning, in 1823 saw the members of the Holy Alliance—Russia, Austria, and especially France—considering sending an army to the New World to assist the Spanish king to subdue his revolted provinces, she not only announced her opposition but secured the assistance of the United States. The latter, fearing, naturally, that a foreign army in America would mean the acquisition of territory by

France and Russia, and thus the beginning of new empires, felt its own safety threatened, and in Monroe's message to Congress, declared "that the American Continents, by the free and independent condition which they have assumed and maintain, are henceforth not to be considered as subjects for future colonization by any European powers."

But such an attitude could be made effective only by superiority at sea, a condition not true of the United States. If it had not been, therefore, that the United States had behind it the force of British sea power, it would hardly have been able to maintain the Monroe Doctrine as the leading principle of American policy.

On this fundamental fact all the expansion of the United States before the Civil War is based. Just as the failure of Napoleon's sea power led him to sell Louisiana to Jefferson, so only because the United States was free from European interference was it able to carry forward its march westward across the plains and the Rocky Mountains to the shores of the Pacific. In this development sea power played a real part. It furnished in the steamboat, first operated by Fulton on the Hudson in 1807 and soon introduced on the Ohio (1811), the Mississippi (1812), and the Great Lakes (1819), the cheapest and quickest means of migration and travel. The very volume of the westward movement was also greatly dependent on the state of the shipping industry. "The migration westward declined during the good times of the Napoleonic Wars, rose in a huge wave which settled Ohio at the Peace of Amiens, and the Embargo Act and the War of 1812 sent many settlers west."[1] The disturbed condition of commerce just after the war diverted men from seafaring and sent them over the Alleghanies and down the Ohio toward

[1] Bogart, *Economic History of the United States*, p. 190.

the free land of the Mississippi Valley. The westward movement did not attain its full tide till the maritime interests of the country lost their amazing prosperity as neutral carriers in a time of European war, or until the prëeminence of foreign trade and shipping declined in American life.

But the influence of sea power on American expansion was not generally so negative and suicidal. The claims of the United States to the Oregon territory were, as has been noted, largely due to the discovery of the mouth of the Columbia by Captain Gray in 1792. In the events which preceded the acquisition of California and the Southwest, the navy played an important part. Indeed, American sea power was so ready in its help that in 1842, when Captain Catesby Jones, while cruising off the coast of Peru, heard a rumor that Great Britain had secured California from Mexico and was soon to take possession, he hastened north to the California coast, landed at Monterey, seized the city, and declared the whole region the property of the United States. For one day he maintained possession. Then, convinced that the reports he had received were false, he gave back the place to the Mexican officials. As he had acted absolutely without orders, the Government disavowed the act and made profuse apologies, but naturally could not entirely appease the anger of the Mexicans. When war was actually declared in 1846, the American squadron in the Pacific, under Commodore Sloat, immediately proceeded to the scene and seized Monterey, San Francisco, and Los Angeles. American sailors and marines also assisted the army in maintaining the American occupation. On the Gulf coast of Mexico the navy did disagreeable blockading duty and assisted in the attack and capture of Vera Cruz before General Scott and his troops landed on their expedition to Mexico City.

It was during this period, also, that the naval connection with the Isthmus of Panama began. In 1848, when Europe was in the throes of the revolutions which sprang up over Europe upon the overthrow of Louis Philippe in France, the United States had made a treaty with New Granada (now the United States of Colombia) by which it was granted the right of transit across the Isthmus of Panama. In return it guaranteed to Colombia the possession of the Isthmus against all enemies. Across this strip was built the Panama Railroad, and over its rails crawled the trains of gold-seekers for California and a never-ending line of supplies. The uninterrupted operation of such a railway could be secured only by force, and the navy was the means by which this was secured. Thus in America during the first half of the nineteenth century sea power, whether British or American, became in the last analysis the foundation upon which American independence and American expansion across the continent really rested.

The most conspicuous triumphs of American sea power, however, were displayed in the Far East. The frigate *Congress* in 1819 was the first American ship of war to visit Chinese waters; the second was the *Vincennes* in 1830,—the first American naval vessel, by the way, to circumnavigate the globe. Every visit secured new respect for American ships and new privileges from the rather arrogant Chinese, who restricted foreign trade to Canton, and hedged in the conduct of business with humiliating and vexatious regulations, not even allowing foreign ships of war to remain in Chinese waters. But in 1840, at the close of the Opium War, Commodore Kearney of the *Constitution,* who was in Chinese waters, secured, largely by well-timed insistence and especially by dealing fairly with the Chinese authorities regarding American smuggling of opium, a promise that whatever commercial priv-

ileges were granted to the British at the conclusion of the war should be also granted to other nations,—the inauguration of our "open door" policy in the Far East.

Five ports in China having been opened to foreign trade, the eyes of all nations were directed toward Japan, where the policy of isolation still continued. Only at Nagasaki, and there only through the Dutch, was any foreign trade allowed. The American flag had first been seen off Japan just after the American Revolution. During the Napoleonic Wars, American vessels were hired by the Dutch to carry their cargoes to Europe; such vessels flew the Dutch flag in Japanese waters, but the Stars and Stripes elsewhere. About 1820, however, American vessels penetrated to the whaling grounds east and north of Japan. But if ships were wrecked on the Japanese coast, the men who landed on those shores were treated with great harshness by the Japanese authorities and imprisoned indefinitely. With the introduction of steam vessels it also became necessary to establish coaling-stations in the Far East. And, above all, the vigorous expansion of world trade which characterized the years about the middle of the century made all the leading nations ambitious to be first to enjoy the products of Japan and first to introduce their wares and goods.

After Commodore Biddle, who was authorized through the American envoy to China to make the attempt, had visited Japan in 1846 but had found the Japanese authorities opposed to concluding any treaty, the matter was entrusted in 1852 to Commodore Matthew C. Perry, who was furnished with a letter from President Fillmore, written by the Secretary of State, Daniel Webster. His instructions were to secure, by persuasion if possible, humane treatment of all Americans who were shipwrecked on the Japanese coast, also the opening of several ports for the

obtaining of supplies, and perhaps for regular trade. If the first of these objects could not be secured otherwise, he was to use threats, but not force except in self-defense. It was in this skilful mixture of friendliness, threats, and absolute insistence upon what he wished that Perry achieved his success. In their treatment of foreigners the Japanese had been accustomed to use every kind of trickery and insult at their disposal. They tried the same methods on Perry, but soon found that he would not brook insult, and was easily their equal in diplomacy.

Perry's squadron of two side-wheel frigates and two sailing sloops of war had no sooner reached the Bay of Yedo below Tokio than it was surrounded by a cordon of Japanese police-boats. But when they attempted to make fast to the American ships, they were roughly pushed off, and no Japanese was allowed to come aboard. When an inferior official approached and ordered the ships to leave, the Americans replied that they had a letter from the President of the United States and that they would deliver it nowhere else, and only to officials of the highest rank.

Finally, the vice-governor of the province arrived and was allowed to come aboard. Perry, however, would not permit him to enter his cabin but deputed a mere lieutenant to talk with him. Not only was the vice-governor's request that the squadron go to Nagasaki refused, but threats were made that unless the police-boats were ordered away they would be fired on. The astonished Japanese official hastened to comply, and, when he left, promised that a higher official would come the next morning.

The next morning he arrived, the governor himself, attired in full uniform with lacquered helmet held in place by a ferocious chin-strap. His formidable appearance was lost on Perry, for the American commander refused to see such an inferior official and appointed three of his cap-

tains to treat with him. The governor insisted that the Americans should go to Nagasaki, but they again refused, and as they noticed that he used different titles for the President and the emperor, they at once protested and demanded that both should be treated alike.

Not till the authorities at Tokio, the Shogunate, who were the military rulers and the only authorities with whom Perry carried on any negotiations, had, on Perry's threat to move up the bay and deliver the letter in Tokio in person, agreed that two princes should receive the letter in a house to be erected on the shore near by, did Perry himself appear. Then, on July 14, 1853, he landed in full uniform, amid thundering salutes, and accompanied by a considerable body of sailors and marines. Guarded on each side by a gigantic negro, he proceeded to the meeting-place and delivered the letter, which was engrossed on vellum and contained in a gold box richly decorated. Not insisting upon an immediate reply, he gave notice that he would return in the spring, and soon afterward sailed for China.

In the meantime the political factions in Japan were almost evenly divided as to abandoning the policy of isolation and inaugurating intercourse with foreign nations. When, however, Perry returned in midwinter in order to forestall the French and Russians, both of whom were planning missions to Japan, he found the government favorable, and on March 13, 1854, concluded a treaty which secured substantially the objects he sought.

As has been well said, "the opening of Japan was a memorable achievement, whether viewed as an international spectacle, a difficult task, or an historical event. Its spectacular features arrested the attention, and kindled the imagination, of the whole civilized world. The surmounting of its difficulties might well have challenged the ablest statesmen of the century. Perry's success was in no small

measure the result of a rare combination of strong qualities of character,—firmness, sagacity, tact, dignity, patience, and determination. His achievement was one of the great historical events of the last century, the far-reaching effects of which are still but partially revealed.''[1]

This episode and the opening of Korea to American trade through similar methods by Commodore Shufeldt in 1882 are two of the greatest diplomatic achievements of naval officers in American history. Both reveal in clear outline that side of sea power in its naval sense which is little appreciated by the ordinary citizen. As the expansion of commerce has proceeded and the United States has come into touch with every people and every tribe which has a sea-coast, the navy has found much of its mission to lie in the protection of American lives and property and the maintenance of the prestige of the nation. In this activity, neither purely peaceful nor purely belligerent, but a delicate blending of the two, the naval forces of the country have contributed in no small degree to the expansion of the nation and done much to advance the cause of civilization.

[1] Paullin, *Diplomatic Negotiations of Naval Officers*, p. 281.

CHAPTER XIII

THE CLIMAX OF AMERICAN ACHIEVEMENT WITH WOOD AND SAIL

TO present simply the influence of sea power in a purely naval sense as the most important feature of American maritime activity between the War of 1812 and the "irrepressible conflict" over slavery and States' Rights, which rumbles like the premonition of an earthquake during all the period, would be to disregard the much more prominent place which the commercial fleets of the United States occupied in the thought of the world in the half-century of comparative peace which settled upon Europe after the defeat and exile of Napoleon. Then it was that America acquired again in peace much of the importance as a maritime nation which she had achieved during the stormy period of the Revolution and the Napoleonic struggle. Toward the end of this half-century she not only reached new heights for her maritime industry but saw the climax of her achievement with wood and sail. During this period the American clipper-ship, with her clouds of canvas, her lofty spars, her yacht-like lines, fought brilliantly to perpetuate the wooden sailing-ship. In the struggle against the slow but inevitable victory of steam and iron she reached heights of achievement the world had never before witnessed.

When this important epoch ended and civil war came, came also the end of an American merchant marine of any great importance in foreign trade and the eclipse

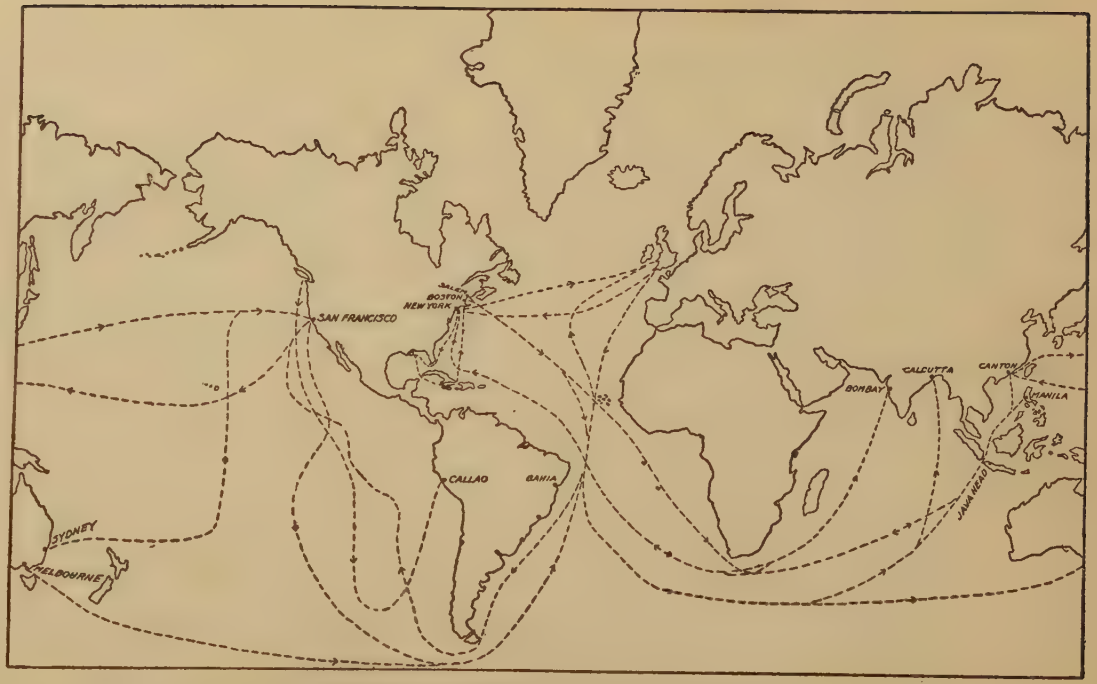
of shipping as a distinctly American industry. For causes which will be stated and which are not connected with the Civil War to any great extent, the American commercial fleets dwindled to insignificance, and the ports of China, Australia, India, South America, the Mediterranean, and western Europe ceased to see as a familiar sight the Stars and Stripes and the American sea-captain with his air of conquest and command.

With the coming of peace conditions in 1815 it was natural that the United States, already firmly established as a maritime power with an abundance of ships and an increasing population and industry, should see its hope for success on the sea in freedom of trade, the slogan which had been inscribed on its banners during the war. But as other nations might not wish to adopt a similar policy, the American people decided on the policy of reciprocity; that is, that no restrictions on foreign vessels of any nation trading with United States ports should be continued, if that nation allowed America similarly free commerce. By this means, and later by the imposition of heavy duties on nations not reciprocating, the United States gradually secured participation in the whole trade of the world. In 1830 Great Britain opened her trade with the West Indies to American ships, and in 1849, under the influence of Richard Cobden and the other statesmen of the Manchester free-trade school of thought, she repealed the remaining provisions of the Navigation Acts, and even admitted foreign ships to her coastwise trade. The safety of navigation had also been greatly increased by such campaigns as Decatur's and Lord Exmouth's against the Barbary pirates, and by Commodore Porter's measures against the pirates and irregular privateers of the West Indian seas.

More than in any preceding period, the whaling industry, which shared with the fisheries inclusion in "coastwise

trade,'' to which after 1817 only American vessels were admitted, and on which no import or other duties were levied, had become almost an American monopoly. Though such whaling centers as Nantucket had lost half their fleets during the war and Nantucket had only twenty-three vessels left, American whaling later increased in importance, and in 1849, according to an English writer, the United States possessed 596 whale-ships to Great Britain's fourteen. With the increase of this industry went the enterprise of its captains and seamen. In 1818 they invaded the off-shore ground of the Pacific to the east of the Marquesas Islands; in 1821 a few American vessels sought the whales off the Japanese coast, which increased in 1822 to thirty ships. In 1835, the Kodiak ground off the northwest coast of North America saw its first Yankee whaleship, and the pursuit of the leviathan of the sea was soon extended to the Kamchatkan coast and the waters of Bering Sea and the Arctic.

Similar was the history of the American fisheries. Although trouble ensued after the War of 1812 and at frequent intervals later regarding American fishing-rights off the British provinces of northeast Canada, Congress increased the bounties paid fishing-vessels constructed in the United States, and thus maintained the fishing-fleets, which supplied American merchantmen with cheap food to carry to the slave plantations of the Southern States and the West Indies, and also to the Roman Catholic countries of southern Europe. The difficulties about fishing near the coasts of Nova Scotia and Newfoundland drove the daring American fishermen to Labrador,—where in 1820, 530 American sails were seen,—and to the banks of Newfoundland which lie so far to sea that they had previously been shunned by fishermen. But in 1821 three Gloucestermen tried the St. George's Bank, and despite rough weather



PRINCIPAL ROUTES FOR SAILING VESSELS

These routes are for sailing vessels of both the present and the past. The similarity between this map and the cruises of the American frigates in the War of 1812 and of the *Alabama* in the Civil War should be noted. The concentration of routes in the "cross roads of the Atlantic" between Cape Verde and Brazil should also be observed.

secured large hauls. Such fleets were the nursery of American sailors in the foreign trade, and in the navy that sprang up so suddenly with the outbreak of the Civil War.

The increase of American activity on the world's highways on the seas was also greatly helped by the natural development of trade throughout the world during the first half of the nineteenth century. In all the new fields thus opened up, American seamen and merchants were not behind other nations in their efforts to secure a share. In 1816 began the regular crossing of the Atlantic, the Black Ball line of packet-ships between New York and Liverpool. Built on sturdy lines which could resist the North Atlantic gales, and crowded with enough sail to sink a ship under any other than their eager, skilful American skippers, these vessels sailed as regularly as the day of the week came around, and traveled laden with emigrants from Europe or the products of the Western world. The opening of the Erie Canal in 1825 soon made New York the great export center of the country, and from its wharves left most of the sailing-packets, for example, the Red Star Line, and the Dramatic Line, whose ships made the trip to Europe in from sixteen days upward. Other regular lines sailed also between Boston and Liverpool, New York and Havre, and New York and New Orleans.

With the Far East, the chief trade under the Stars and Stripes was still maintained with the merchants of Canton. Hither in 1821 as many as 126 ships sailed from Salem alone. About the same date the Salem navigators turned their prows to Madagascar and Zanzibar, where gum opal for varnishes was obtained, and to Manila for hemp, which was far superior to the old materials for cordage. The extension of American shipping was soon evident; in 1826 American ships carried 92.5 per cent. of their country's foreign trade, import and export; by 1831 the coastwise

tonnage surpassed the foreign tonnage; in 1838 the former reached a million tons. It was not till 1847 that this figure was reached in the foreign trade, and that American shipping with other countries surpassed the tonnage figures of the years of the Napoleonic Wars. Before this high-water mark was reached, as early as 1840, it was estimated that two hundred thousand Americans were connected with maritime industries and commerce, and that the capital invested reached $430,000,000.

That the American sailor still merited the admiration of Europeans, as much in 1835 as in 1775, when Burke spoke so highly of her whalemen, is shown by the words of De Tocqueville in his "Democracy in America," a work published the former year:

> The European sailor navigates with prudence; he only sets sail when the weather is favorable; if an unfortunate accident befalls him, he puts into port; at night he furls a portion of his canvas; and when the whitening billows intimate the vicinity of land, he checks his way and takes an observation of the sun. But the American neglects these precautions and braves these dangers. He weighs anchor in the midst of tempestuous gales; by night and day he spreads his sheets to the winds; he repairs as he goes along such damage as his vessel may have sustained from the storm; and when he at last approaches the term of his voyage, he darts onward to the shore as if he already descried a port. The Americans are often shipwrecked, but no trader crosses the seas so rapidly. And as they perform the same distance in shorter time, they can perform it at a cheaper rate. . . .
>
> I cannot better explain my meaning than by saying that the Americans affect a sort of heroism in their manner of trading. But the European merchant will always find it very difficult to imitate his American competitor; who, in adopting the system I have just described, follows not only a calculation of his gain, but an impulse of his nature.

But the supreme test of American maritime efficiency had arrived. In 1840 an Englishman, Samuel Cunard, received

a subsidy from the British Government and began the famous Cunard Line with four side-wheel wooden steamers, first to Halifax and Boston, then to New York, which soon became the main terminus. Meanwhile the Opium War between Great Britain and China was throwing considerable trade into the hands of American shippers and captains, and the years of peace in Europe between the revolutionary movements of 1830 and those of 1848, gave a decided impetus to American trade expansion. The export of American products, especially cotton, had also grown to tremendous size, and it was simply a question whether this expanding trade should fall to Britain, with her steamers, or to America, the home of cheap sailing-craft. With the recurring spasms of anti-British sentiment which were stirred by the fishery question, the northeastern boundary, the dispute over Oregon, and the remarks of English travelers, such as Dickens, whose "American Notes" appeared in 1842, it became almost a matter of patriotism for America to meet the challenge and show that sail could beat steam.

The skill of American seamen could hardly be improved, but the ships they sailed could always be made faster and more efficient. It was this latter development that made the American merchant marine of wood and canvas astonish the world for the two decades after 1840. The clipper ship seems to have sprung from the French luggers which brought supplies to America during the Revolution. These were the prototypes of the so-called Baltimore clippers, really schooners, of world-wide reputation for speed as privateers in the War of 1812, and later much sought for as slave-smugglers on the African coast. In the years just after 1840, the opium trade with China attracted many Americans because of its great profits and because fast vessels such as the Baltimore clippers were needed. But all these vessels were small schooners, far different from

the huge clipper ships which were to be the climax of wood and sail in the "clipper ship era" from 1843 to 1860.

The first large ship on clipper lines was the *Ann McKim* of Baltimore, built in 1832. But the real movement began in 1841 when John W. Griffeths of New York exhibited a model of a proposed clipper which would change the full-beamed, solid lines of the old cargo vessels, where capacity seemed the only object, to the more slender lines of the new type, where the greatest breadth was farther aft. With this new model before them, American ship-builders soon produced the fastest and most economical cargo vessels of their generation. From the yards of Donald McKay, at East Boston, and William H. Webb, at New York, to mention only two of the foremost, came creations of wood and canvas that quickly established the supremacy of American shipwrights and riggers. Instead of the insignificant 493 tons of the *Ann McKim,* Donald McKay turned out such ships as the *Flying Fish,* 1600 tons, the *Sovereign of the Seas,* 2400 tons, and the *Great Republic,* 4555 tons. The latter was 325 feet long, four-masted, and with a main-yard 120 feet in length. In the coastwise trade the adoption of the schooner rig on larger vessels helped to lower the cost of transportation and meet the menace of the steamboat, for on a schooner only two-thirds as large a crew was required to work the sails.

In all the fields of ocean commerce the American ship now won fresh victories. In the transatlantic trade, the steamers, virtually all British until 1850, were obliged to carry so much coal that they had room for little else, and were besides frequently passed by Yankee sailers. In 1852 the *Sovereign of the Seas,* during a fast fourteen-day trip between the two continents, made 340 miles one day by sail alone, while the Cunarder *Canada* was covering only 200.

The best American liner was the *Dreadnought,* built in 1853, and commanded by Samuel Samuels. On her first trip from Liverpool westward, she left a day later than the Cunard Liner *Canada,* and arrived in New York just as the latter made Boston, a shorter distance. Passages of thirteen, fourteen, and fifteen days were not uncommon.

In the extensive China trade, sometimes via the Cape of Good Hope, then later, after the California trade began, by way of the Horn, American clippers threatened to take the East India trade from the very mouths of British ship commanders. This was especially after 1849, when the British Navigation Acts were repealed and American ships were free to carry tea and other products from India to the very docks of London and Liverpool. During the years 1840–60, many a British or Dutch bark with upper yards bare, making slow headway across the Pacific or Indian oceans, saw astern a pyramid of snow-white canvas appear over the horizon and sweep by in the course of a few hours,—a Yankee clipper from New York to Hongkong, or Batavia, flying unreefed royals and with topgallant studdingsails out to catch every bit of breeze. Such was the American habit of carrying every inch of sail the yards would bear and forcing the ship day and night toward her destination. One of the most famous clipper commanders, Captain Bob Waterman, is said to have put padlocks on the topsail sheets and halliards to prevent timid seamen from lowering sail in every little blow. Many a ship's log had records like that of the *Florence* on her trip of ninety-two days from Shanghai to England. For nine days in succession she carried royal studdingsails. From December 26th to March 20th she never reefed her topstails. On another voyage out to

Penang the *Florence* for the entire trip of eighty-one days never started her topsail halliards, except once to take in a single reef for a few hours.

Another factor which helped to establish the superiority of the American sailing-ship was the earlier adoption of scientific methods in navigation. In 1842 Lieutenant Matthew Fontaine Maury, just placed in charge of what later became the Naval Observatory and Hydrographic Office in Washington, began the compilation of data for charts which would show the winds, currents, and other phenomena encountered in the waters traversed by ships. Through these charts, and the sailing-directions furnished with them, American skippers were able to cut days, and sometimes weeks, from their passages. By these methods alone Maury is estimated to have saved the American merchant marine at least $2,250,000 per annum.

But probably the greatest influence in American maritime history of this period was exerted by the discovery of gold in California in 1848. All trade between the Atlantic coast of the United States and the Californian gold-fields of the Sacramento Valley was coastwise traffic, from which foreign ships were excluded. It did not, therefore, feel the competition of the British steamship lines, nor have many rivals between New York and Aspinwall (now Colon) and between Panama, western end of the Panama Railroad, and San Francisco. Especially in the route around Cape Horn the clippers had the field to themselves, and the rivalry between ship-builder and ship-builder, and between captain and captain was intense, for in this coast-to-coast trade were made the great fortunes of the day, both ashore and at sea.

As mails and passengers filled the Panama route to exhaustion, the clippers around the Horn could charge what they pleased for freight, and a ship could in one voyage to

the west coast earn profit enough to pay for its building and operation.

If the swift clipper returned by way of China and circumnavigated the globe, its profits were much increased. Here again American seamanship was a vital factor. In 1851 the *Surprise,* Captain Dumaresq, entered the Golden Gate, ninety-six days out from New York, having during the 16,308 miles from Sandy Hook, reefed topsails but twice. On August 31, 1851, the *Flying Cloud,* Captain Creesy, arrived after a voyaage of eighty-nine days, making 374 miles in one day. This surpassed the best day's run of any Atlantic steamer of that time, and meant an average of 227 miles a day, or 9½ miles per hour throughout the voyage. On her return from California via Honolulu in 1853, the *Sovereign of the Seas* made 424 miles in twenty-four hours, and at times attained a speed of 19 to 20 knots.

A similar impetus to clipper-ship sea power came with the discovery of gold in Australia in 1851. As the voyage was long and there were few possible coaling-stations, steamers could not be used, and the American-built clipper-ship, whether owned by Americans or foreigners, found itself supreme. Furthermore, Maury's calculations disclosed a new route which did not touch at the Cape of Good Hope, as had been the custom, and which cut the time of the voyage in two. By taking a course far south of the cape ships fell in with steady westerly winds which carried them east with great speed, and on the return the ship sailed east from Melbourne around Cape Horn, thus circumnavigating the globe. In this trade American-built ships, such as Donald McKay's *Sovereign of the Seas, Red Jacket, Chariot of Fame, Lightning, Champion of the Seas,* and *James Baines,* made passages which were not surpassed by any other vessels.

It may well be maintained that the years from 1854 to

1862 marked the heyday, the climax, of American merchant ships of the sail and wood period. In the United States ship-building was carried on more profitably than anywhere else in the world; here was the native genius in design of a people bred to the sea for generations; here were cheap timber and skilful workmen; here was an increasing demand for more ocean carriers to provide for the expanding transoceanic trade. The commerce with the half-opened East of China and Japan and the tremendous demands of territories like California and Australia, where in a night thousands of eager settlers appeared and demanded supplies and equipment, opened new avenues for shipping. The revolutionary movements in Europe in 1848 resulted in vast emigration from the European continent, and, as explained before, the repeal of the Navigation Acts by England also gave fresh impetus. With the breaking out of the Crimean War in 1854 and the Sepoy Mutiny in 1857, came a still greater call for shipping, and during these years, 1854–62, American tonnage in the foreign trade amounted each year to two million gross tons or more, a figure never surpassed before or since. In 1861 came the highest figure, 2,496,894 tons; 1858 saw the peak of tonnage in the whale fishery, 198,594 tons; in 1862 the deep-sea fisheries reached their climax with 193,459 tons of shipping.

When, therefore, the Civil War began, American sea power in a commercial sense was, including coastwise, one third that of the entire world, and virtually equal to Great Britain's. On every sea the American flag was seen, in every port American ships were found, and the hold of America on the carrying-trade of the world seemed firmly established. The rich men of the day, the captains of industry of their time, were almost entirely the merchants and ship-owners. The United States from its earliest settlement,—through its colonial period with its West Indian

trade, through the Revolutionary epoch, whose financial straits were so often relieved by the chief maritime merchant of the day, Robert Morris, through the period of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars, and through the later expansion of foreign trade in the clipper-ship era, —through these periods the United States was distinctly a maritime nation. Like the Scotch poet America could have sung, "Our heritage the sea."

What were the conditions which caused the United States to decline as a shipping power? There were many, including the Civil War and the destruction of Northern ships by the Confederate cruisers, but the chief cause was the inevitable victory of the steamship built of iron. Against the power of steam the argosies of sail were in the long run powerless, though the genius of American ship-builders and navigators prolonged the struggle for many years. Sail and wood had reached their zenith, and could rise no higher; steam and iron were in their infancy and had their hands upon the future. The changes in domestic affairs also gradually turned against American shipping interests; the North, especially New England, built factories and wished protection against foreign products; the growing sectional feeling alienated Southern support of bounties and subsidies, which had been granted fishermen and transatlantic liners, both sail and steam. There was therefore little encouragement for the few ship-builders in the North who realized that American ships must quickly change from wood and sail to steam and iron, and they accordingly received no governmental assistance and had to fight the natural conservatism of the builder of clipper-ships, with his yard and workmen organized by the old methods. But the story of the skill and enterprise which displayed the American flag in every port of the world, and which originated new types of ships, strikingly superior to the old lum-

bering cargo-carriers of the early decades of the century, constitutes one of the chapters in the history of American sea power which ought not to be forgotten. With the gradual exhaustion of iron and coal, it may be that men will some day again fall back on the cheaper wind and wood for at least some share in transportation by sea.

CHAPTER XIV

FULTON AND ERICSSON IN AMERICA REVOLUTIONIZE THE SEA POWER OF THE WORLD

THE Latin poet sang: "His heart was cased in oak and triple brass who first put forth upon the treacherous sea." Yet the beginning of navigation was not a greater change than the transformation which occurred in merchant marine and navy in the first half of the nineteenth century. Sail and wood had been since the dawn of history the very essentials and fundamentals of all seafaring; yet before the triumphal march of human invention and the undaunted enterprise of two Americans the ships of the time lost the need of sails and found wood almost useless, and, abandoning both, entered on a new age of maritime achievement.

It is difficult for the present-day reader to realize the wide gap which lies between Nelson's ships in the blockade of Napoleonic France and the fleets of battle-ships and merchantmen that plowed the seas a half century later. The very essence of navigation by sail was the wind; yet to-day it hardly enters the thought of the voyager. That the ship should carry within her the power which would propel her over the seas, as a horse has within him the power of locomotion, was hardly conceivable; also for the wooden walls of the ship of the line to be entirely discarded, and the very masts and bulkheads to be of a material that would sink if placed in water, would have seemed to earlier generations a mere vagary of an abnormal imagi-

nation. Accordingly the two men who were the real leaders in this transformation, and the steps by which it occurred, are well worth consideration in any history of sea power.

It was inevitable, as soon as James Watt in 1765 had made his great improvement on the crude steam-engines of his day, the separate condenser, that steam should some day become the motive power of ships, and until one realizes the revolution in navigation which it involved, it is hard to understand why sail power continued to hold the mastery of the seas for nearly three quarters of a century longer. As we have seen, the climax of sail was in the fifties of the next century, and not till after the Civil War do we fairly find ourselves in the steam era on the sea.

The delay was due, however, to perfectly natural conditions, which also explain why—despite the mechanical supremacy of Great Britain in the early years of the last century—practical and actual steam-navigation first appeared not in England but in America. The conservatism of the older countries was simply the usual tendency of society, the willingness to carry on the affairs of the world in the well-worn, well-practised ways which had proved their worth through the centuries. Usually during time of war there is considerable chance for experiments, for the weaker sea power seeks by ingenuity to overcome the handicap of inferior forces. But, singularly enough, when it came to new ideas of naval warfare, Napoleon, who represented the weaker sea power, happened to be not one who sought for revolutionary changes in method but one who used more brilliantly than his opponents the methods and materials already in existence. Accordingly, though France as the weaker naval power would be expected to overcome superior forces by some new idea in warfare, she did nothing of the sort. Great Britain, moreover, confident in the strength of her sailing-ships of war and her

wooden walls, which had protected her ever since the Armada, did not feel the need—though she was on the highroad of mechanical invention—to deviate from the sure path of experience. Besides, her inventors found full occupation in the improvement of manufacturing.

But in America the conditions were quite different. The new nation was expanding inland toward the West, where rivers abounded but roads did not exist. Though, like England, she started building canals, her imperative need was some method of navigation of the deep rivers that flowed into the Atlantic and some means of transportation up and down the Ohio, the Mississippi, and the Great Lakes. On the rivers the old methods of sail were virtually impossible; there were narrow channels, sharp turns, swift currents, and sudden squalls from the bluffs that lined their banks. In the United States some other method than sailing had to be devised to furnish the quick and reliable transportation so much needed.

With the natural progressiveness and freedom from tradition of a new country the United States turned toward the untried power of the steam-engine. It is needless to mention the various devices projected, or actually tried, for navigation by steam. Robert Fulton, therefore, though he deserves his title of the inventor of the steamboat, did not anticipate every one else in all the adaptation of the steam-engine to marine navigation; his claim rests rather on his being the first to demonstrate in a definite way that the steam-engine could be applied to navigation successfully enough to overthrow sail as the commonest method of propulsion.

It was, therefore, with Fulton, who had a real genius for invention, that the first steamboat originated. Though he did not receive much education in his boyhood days near Lancaster, Pennsylvania, his mind was active and his con-

fidence great. In 1782 at the age of seventeen he removed to Philadelphia, where he became by 1785 a miniature-painter of some ability, and may have seen before he went abroad in the next year, or perhaps, in 1787, John Fitch's steamboat on the Delaware, a craft with several paddles placed parallel to one another and made to strike the water on each side of the boat like the paddles of an Indian canoe. After pursuing art, especially portraiture, in London for several years, Fulton suddenly abandoned an apparently successful career and ever after devoted himself to invention. His earliest sketch of a steamboat dates from 1793, but during the first few years he was chiefly occupied in inventing a machine for cutting marble, another for lifting canal-boats to a higher level with the use of a lock, and a machine for digging canals. Passing over to France in 1797, he apparently kept working on the steamboat, conducting as early as 1798 experiments with the screw propeller.

But he was chiefly engaged here with a submarine torpedo-boat, which in 1800 he actually constructed and in which he made trips on the Seine near Paris and at Havre and Brest. He even made a voyage of seventy miles on the high seas in his cockle-shell, looking for English brigs to torpedo, but the news of the existence of his dastardly war engine, as it was then considered, had reached the British fleets, and they avoided him. Although Fulton's invention did not accomplish anything, it contained the essential characteristic of the modern submarine,—ability to submerge and navigate underwater. Its motive power, however, was so deficient, being only a screw turned by hand, that it could not overtake any vessel or travel any considerable distance. Furthermore, its success depended—like that of its predecessor, Bushnell's submarine of 1777, which made an unsuccessful attack on the British 64-gun

Eagle in the Hudson River—on reaching the bottom of the vessel and there placing the torpedo, or mine, as we should call it to-day.

The arrival of Robert R. Livingston as American Minister to France in 1801 really marks the beginning of Fulton's definite efforts to solve the problem of steam-navigation, for Livingston was much interested in the matter, was conversant with all the various experimenters then working in America, especially Morey, Roosevelt, and Stevens, and he had already secured an act from the New York Legislature giving him a monopoly of steam-navigation in the state. In 1802 Fulton and Livingston signed a partnership agreement whereby Fulton was furnished funds for constructing a small boat for trial on the Seine. This steamboat made a successful trip on August 9, 1803, and attained a speed of about three miles an hour. Fulton did not lay claim to having invented any constituent part of the craft; the boiler was of French make and of well-known design and the paddle-wheels had been used by others before him. He claimed only a more successful arrangement and combination of these parts. Accordingly, safely buttressed by a possible monopoly of the Hudson and its tributaries, he sought no patent, but with Livingston prepared to set up in America a steamboat which would have commercial possibilities.

As England was admittedly the leading nation in the manufacture of machinery, Fulton ordered an engine from Boulton & Watt, of Soho, near Birmingham, asking for some special features but in the main using the standard type of engine of the day. The boiler was made in London, and the whole shipped to America. But meanwhile Napoleon had assembled at Boulogne an army with which he intended to invade England. Fulton, whose activities in France in the previous war were known and apparently

respected by the British, supervised an attempt to sink some of the French flotillas at Boulogne and Calais by means of submarine bombs, similar to those he had used in France. In this case, however, he was using no submarine but a sort of raft on which a man lay and towed a quantity of explosive against the side of the intended victim. Although Fulton again personally directed these expeditions and received considerable money for his services, the results were negligible. When Napoleon just before Trafalgar gave up hope of securing command of the Channel and packed his army off to the Danube, Fulton gave over the attempt and in October, 1806, started for New York to resume his efforts to introduce steam-navigation in his own country.

In the construction of a suitable hull and in the placing of the engine in the most advantageous position, Fulton displayed a scientific attitude which was in advance of his time. Hitherto naval architects had decided such matters as shape of hull, displacement, and speed, by rule of thumb and experience, but Fulton utilized the results of the latest investigators, especially Beaufoy's experiments regarding the resistance of variously shaped solids moving through water. The technical details are clearly seen in the specifications given in the patent applications filed by Fulton in 1809 and 1810, illustrated as they are by drawings which show his skill as an artist and his preëminence as an engineer. It is not, therefore, in the improvement of the engine that Fulton contributed most, but in the scientific calculation of details of the hull, and in fitting hull and engine to each other.

On August 17, 1807, almost four years to a day after the successful trial on the Seine, *The Steamboat,* as it was first known, or the *Clermont* as it was later called when others of its kind appeared on the Hudson, started from

New York for Albany, and arrived at the latter place in thirty-two hours, a speed of a little less than five miles per hour. The craft which thus inaugurated the era of steam was 150 feet long, and 13 feet beam, and drew 2 feet of water. Its displacement was 100 tons. So successful did it prove that Livingston secured an extension of his monopoly until 1833, and the line thus established has continued to run to the present day.

The revolutionary change from sail power to steam was soon evident. Steamboats appeared and multiplied on all the principal rivers of the United States. Only a month after the *Clermont* made her maiden trip, John C. Stevens of Hoboken, who as early as 1803 had constructed a small twin-screw steam vessel which actually worked, launched a rival ship equipped with paddle-wheels. In 1809, this vessel, debarred from the Hudson by Livingston's monopoly, steamed from New York to Philadelphia, the first steamboat to accomplish an open-sea voyage. As has been mentioned, the first steamer appeared on the Ohio in 1811, on the Mississippi in 1812, and on the Great Lakes in 1819, and the steamboat thus had an important influence in developing the valleys of the Ohio and the Mississippi. In 1825 when the Supreme Court declared Livingston's state monopoly unconstitutional as a control of interstate commerce, in the famous case of Gibbons vs. Ogden, a new stimulus was given to steamer lines between the principal cities. In England the *Comet,* built in 1811, seems to have been the first steamboat to deserve mention, but not till 1820 was steam-navigation at all common there. It was certainly the example of Fulton that led to the use of steam in England, and he was directly responsible for its introduction into Russia. As late as 1824 the French Government sent a commissioner to the United States to report on the advisability of establishing steam-navigation in France.

Fulton, however, did not rest on his well-earned claim as the father of steam-navigation. In 1811 he introduced the steam ferry-boat, constructed with bow and stern exactly alike and rounded at each end like the ferry-boats of to-day. In 1813, he designed and constructed the first steam war-ship, the *Demologos,* i. e., the *Voice of the People,*—a name that recalls Fulton's enthusiasm for democracy, one of his real inspirations as an inventor. The vessel was designed primarily for harbor defense. The plans were different from any vessel ever built before or after. To protect the machinery, which utilized the paddle-wheel principle, a single wheel was placed in a well in the very center of the hull and protected above by a deck. The hull had a bow and stern like a ferry-boat, with two rudders at each end. Thirty 32-pounders were on board, and were to fire red-hot shot. The main deck was protected by solid wooden armor, four feet, ten inches thick.

The *Demologos* was not completed till after the War of 1812, but made actual trips outside of Sandy Hook without difficulty. After Fulton's death in 1815 she was named the *Fulton* in honor of her inventor, and remained at the Brooklyn Navy Yard till 1829, when she blew up. So revolutionary was her design that in England any exaggeration about her passed as truth. One writer even stated that her sides were thirteen feet thick and that she could, by a mechanical device, brandish three hundred cutlasses with the utmost regularity over her gunwales and could also thrust out an equal number of heavy iron pikes which darted back and forth every fifteen seconds.

Although the paddle-wheel has now been discarded for the screw propeller, except for shallow waters, it is well to remember that the early triumphs of steam-navigation were all won by this means of propulsion. In 1819 the American side-wheeler *Savannah* crossed the Atlantic and

went on as far as St. Petersburg, though chiefly by means of sail. In 1838 the British steamer *Sirius,* also a side-wheeler, arrived in New York after a voyage made wholly by steam. She was followed a day later by another steamer of the same type, the *Great Western.* Transatlantic steamship travel had begun. The early ships of the Cunard Line, established in 1838, were all side-wheelers, and those of the first American line, not established till 1847, were of the same type. In fact, there were some side-wheel Cunarders plowing the Atlantic as late as 1870. Screw steamers did not become common until after the Civil War.

After its introduction into the merchant marine, steam was gradually adopted by the navies of the world, at first in the form of the side-wheeler. England began building steam towing-vessels for her fleets in 1820, but the first real steam war-ship did not appear till 1832. After Fulton's *Demologos,* the first steam vessel in the American Navy was the *Fulton,* not built till 1837, although its construction had been authorized by Congress in 1815. Of the early side-wheel steamers in the American service, the best known was the *Mississippi,* built in 1842 and prominent in Perry's expedition to Japan and in the operations in the Mississippi till her burning at Port Hudson in 1863.

With all the progress in the use of steam in navigation, it is nevertheless true that previous to 1843 the steamer had many points of inferiority to the sailing-vessel. In the transatlantic service, the clean, fast-sailing American packets with their snowy canvas frequently beat the sooty, cranky Cunarders with their clumsy paddle-wheels. On inland waters the side-wheel steamer was supreme, but on the high seas she was never a success, even in the commercial fleets. Her huge paddle-boxes were hit by every wave and made a storm a time of misery and danger. Besides, if heavily laden, she had her wheels too deeply im-

mersed to work effectively and, therefore, when she most needed power, had it least. For naval purposes the side-wheel steamer was almost useless, for her wheels were in exposed positions, and her machinery had to be placed well above the water-line, where it was very vulnerable. It is not strange, therefore, that the use of steam on the oceans and in war had not progressed greatly in 1843, when John Ericsson by the invention of the screw propeller in a practical form for large ships obviated all these difficulties and started another revolution in ship design—one which was to establish firmly the right of steam to the trident of the seas. But Ericsson's services to sea power did not stop here, for by his later invention of his "*Monitor*" type, an iron-armored vessel which was virtually invulnerable and could with one gun do the work of a whole broadside, he revolutionized sea power in its military sense. If, therefore, Fulton was the father of the modern steamship, Ericsson was the father of the modern dreadnought.

Unlike Fulton, who changed in his twenties from art to engineering, John Ericsson had only one ambition all his days. He was reared in the atmosphere of the great mechanical and engineering epoch which began in England with the perfection of the steam-engine by James Watt, and which is concisely described as the Industrial Revolution,—the great transition period for all Europe from medieval life to modern civilization.

Born in Sweden in 1803, his father being connected with canal construction, Ericsson became a draftsman of some ability by his fourteenth year, when he entered the Mechanical Corps of the Swedish Navy. He later served as subaltern in the army and became familiar with ordnance. In 1826 he emigrated to England and immediately started his career as an engineer and inventor. In 1828 he began the use of compressed air for transmitting power, and invented

the first practical steam-engine for extinguishing fires and pumping. By this time he was beginning to give his attention to marine engineering and had invented an improved condenser. In 1828 in remodeling the *Victory,* a ship then fitting out for Arctic exploration, he placed the engines below the water-line, an important matter in a war-ship—as Ericsson regarded the *Victory,* for the commander concealed the real use of the vessel.

For the next ten years invention after invention came forth from the ingenious brain of Ericsson—a locomotive that was a dangerous rival of Stephenson's; a sea lead that measured depth by the compression of air; in fact, over thirty distinct devices which Ericsson in 1863 listed among the best hundred he had made.

As we have seen, the screw propeller was not a new idea, but had been discussed and experimented with by Fulton in his submarine in 1798, by Stevens in 1803, and by English inventors of the thirties, such as Shorter and Smith. But, as in the case of steam, one man established the idea as a practical commercial and naval method of propulsion. That man was not Stevens or Shorter or Smith, but John Ericsson. And it is interesting to note that again it was in the United States that the new idea, though perfected and exhibited in Europe, was first demonstrated and adopted.

The two men whose names should be associated with Ericsson's in this epoch-making event are both Americans, —Francis B. Ogden and Robert F. Stockton. The former was the American Consul at Liverpool, and had in 1831 become a partner of Ericsson in a patent for a steam drum, owing to the fact that as an American citizen he could take out the patent in the United States. As Fulton had in Paris demonstrated his steamboat, so in 1837 Ericsson demonstrated the advantages of the propeller on the Thames

in the *Francis B. Ogden,* a miniature steamer, only forty-five feet long. It towed the American packet-ship *Toronto* against the tide at four and a half knots an hour, and on a later trip propelled the Admiralty barge up the Thames to the discomfiture of the skeptical naval officers aboard. The second American associated with Ericsson was Robert F. Stockton, of New Jersey, a naval officer who saw Ericsson's small screw steamer and became enthusiastic over this new method of propulsion. He immediately had a larger steamer of iron built on the Mersey. This small craft, the *Robert F. Stockton,* crossed the Atlantic under sail and was used for years as a tow-boat on the New Jersey canals. It was, with the exception of Stevens's screw-launch of 1803, the first propeller steamer in America, and the first to be used commercially.

So conservative were English ship-builders and engineers and so enthusiastic his American friends that in 1839 Ericsson left England and proceeded to New York to adopt America as his country for the rest of his days. He came with plans prepared for a steam-frigate with a screw propeller, as Stockton believed he could secure the authorization of Congress for such a vessel. While the deal with the Government was under way, Ericsson fitted out several vessels with his new machinery, among them the *Clarion,* the first screw steamer between New York and Havana, and the *Vandalia,* the first on the Great Lakes. All told, before 1844 (when the *Princeton,* the first naval vessel to be equipped with an Ericsson propeller, was commissioned), he had introduced his invention into twenty-four merchantmen.

From 1841 to 1843 Ericsson was almost entirely engrossed in the building of the *Princeton.* Though Stockton was the one in charge, Ericsson was called upon for one hundred and twenty-four working-drawings, and the fact that the

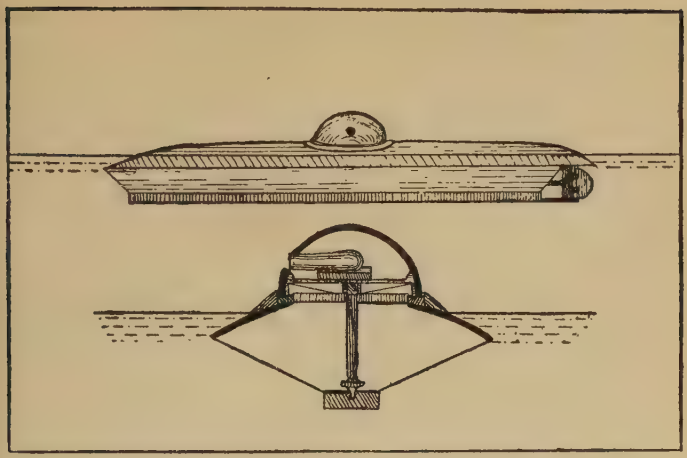
ship embodied his ideas, and virtually his alone, seems to have been well known. The vessel was indeed crowded with inventions of Ericsson's. Besides the screw propeller, he had on her a new hooped gun—the principle of which was adopted later in the *Parrott*—an improved gun-carriage, a friction-gear for controlling the recoil of guns, a range-finder, a self-acting gun-lock, a telescopic smoke-stack, and a system of blowers which made the draft of the furnaces independent of the riddling of the funnel by shot. The engines, much less bulky and much lighter than those of side-wheel steamers, were placed below the water-line, where they were not exposed, like the old paddle-wheels, to every shot that the enemy fired.

From an engineering point of view, therefore, the *Princeton* was the first modern war-ship, for its essential principle still survives and is to-day being applied even to submarine and aërial warfare. The success of the *Princeton,* even before she was tested in the Mexican War, and before she appeared in European waters, started the navies of the world to building screw vessels. In 1843 Ericsson, through his representative abroad, received an order for a propeller for the French 44-gun frigate *Pomona,* and in 1844 in New York he drew the designs for a propeller and an engine of 300-horse-power to be placed in the British frigate *Amphion*. Commercially, the advantages of the screw were also soon recognized. In 1852 it was calculated that whereas the cost of transporting four hundred tons of merchandise five hundred miles with paddle-wheels was virtually a thousand dollars, the screw vessel with auxiliary sail power could do the work for less than a third the amount.

The services of Ericsson to sea power were not, however, ended. Without giving here an account of the dramatic encounter between his iron-clad *Monitor* and the Confederate battery *Merrimac* in the dark days of the Civil War,

it is important to indicate how seven years before that conflict, into which the North entered without one iron-clad vessel, Ericsson was fully prepared so to change the whole course of naval construction and warfare that within a year of the beginning of the Civil War the United States by the adoption of Ericsson's idea, should be overwhelmingly the strongest sea power in the world. The introduction of iron into ship-building, which began in Great Britain in 1838, was inevitably to supersede the wooden walls of the navies, and the adoption of guns throwing explosive shells which would smash wood and set it on fire made the wooden steamer, whether side-wheel or screw, a defenseless hulk. But this was not realized till the Crimean War, when the armored batteries of the French withstood the fire of the Russian forts at Kinburn without receiving any appreciable damage themselves. And it was this war rather than the Civil War that produced the monitor type, Ericsson's chief contribution to sea power. Russia was Sweden's hereditary enemy; Russia represented autocracy, Sweden democracy; Ericsson, intense in his loves and hates, was stirred at the attempts of the Russian Czar to extend his power in the Black Sea. He therefore sent to Napoleon III, through the Swedish Minister in Paris, detailed plans for, and a model of, a new type of ship in which were embodied all the fruits of his inventive genius, and which possessed stability, great gun power such as would destroy land forts, ease of manœuver in shallow waters, economy of armament, and invulnerability,—in other words, the essential points of his later *Monitor*. The following description of it was sent by Ericsson to Napoleon:

> The vessel [is] to be composed entirely of iron. The midship section is triangular, with a broad hollow keel, loaded with about two hundred tons of cast iron blocks to balance the heavy upper works. The ends of the vessel are moderately sharp. The deck,



THE IRONCLAD MONITOR PROPOSED TO NAPOLEON III BY JOHN ERICSSON IN 1854

From Ericsson's own drawings in his "Contributions to the Centennial Exhibition," Plate XLII.

made of plate iron, is curved both longitudinally and transversely, the curvature being five feet; it is made to project eight feet over the rudder and propeller. The entire deck is covered with a lining of sheet iron three inches thick, with an opening in the center sixteen feet in diameter. Over this opening is placed a semi-globular turret of plate iron six inches thick revolving on a vertical column by means of steam power and appropriate gear-work. The vessel is propelled by a powerful steam engine and screw propeller. Air for the combustion in the boilers and for ventilation within the vessel is supplied by a large self-acting centrifugal blower, the fresh air being drawn in through numerous small holes in the turret. The products of combustion in the boilers and the impure air from the vessel are forced out through conductors leading to a cluster of small holes in the deck and turret. Surrounding objects are viewed through small perforations at appropriate places. Reflecting telescopes, capable of being protruded or withdrawn at pleasure, also afford a distinct view of surrounding objects. The rudder-stock passes through a water-tight stuffing box, so as to admit of the helm being

worked within the vessel. Shot striking the deck are deflected, whilst shell exploding on it will prove harmless.[1]

As Ericsson himself stated, the plans he used for the later *Monitor* were not essentially different from those of this submerged armored steam battery with its one gun in a revolving turret shaped like a hemisphere. Unfortunately for Ericsson, by the time the model was received, the armored batteries had finished their work and the Crimean War was over. Consequently Ericsson received only a formal acknowledgment of the receipt and rejection of his scheme. But he kept both plans and model, and apparently revealed to no one the real secret of his ship.

Thus seven years before the Civil War, a Swedish-American had in his desk the plans for that ship which was to save the Union and revolutionize the navies of the world. Though the *Princeton* had been a successful war-ship, the naval authorities of the day seemed to think that Ericsson, with his wealth of ideas far beyond their ken, was on the whole visionary and impractical. When the occasion came, as Ericsson and many others felt it would soon, the time, when "Once to every man and nation comes the moment to decide," would they, these worshipers of naval tradition, have insight and greatness enough to subordinate the force of habit and tradition and listen to the greatest marine engineer the world had ever seen? On the answer hinged the issue of the Civil War and the fate of freedom and democracy.

[1] Ericsson, *Contributions to the Centennial Exhibition*, p. 412.

CHAPTER XV

THE BLOCKADE A DECISIVE INSTRUMENT OF SEA POWER IN THE CIVIL WAR

HISTORY never repeats itself, some would have us believe, but one of the chief pleasures of those interested in historical questions is to find resemblances and parallels for matters far separated in time and place and not usually associated in thought. It is interesting, therefore, to discover that the Civil War, particularly from the point of view of the South, was strikingly like the American Revolution, in regard to sea power. As has been made clear in this volume, the sea power of France, by breaking the command of the Atlantic by the British for a short time in the year 1781, won for the American colonists their freedom from the mother country. No such result ended the South's efforts at revolution and independence, but Southern success depended,—and it is to the credit of Southern statesmen that they recognized this fact,—upon breaking Union control of the sea by inducing European intervention by naval powers stronger than the North. This would give them access to the materials of war in Europe, just as it gave the colonists access to French stores of guns and munitions. More than has generally been conceded by Southerners since that day, was European participation against the Union the only stone on which the ultimate success of the secession movement could be based.

The fact that such intervention was recognized as neces-

sary proves the preponderant influence of sea power in the Civil War. It was the blockade of the Southern coast by the sea forces of the Federal Union that was the decisive instrument in throttling the Confederacy and giving final success to the armies of Sherman and Grant. As long as the government at Richmond had no sea power of any size comparable to the Union strength, and as long as it could not add to its resources the navies of England and of France, there was no real hope that the eleven seceding states could make permanent headway against the industrial resources of the North and its far greater population. But as Mahan so often states and reiterates, "communications dominate war," and sea power with its ability to maintain its own communications and destroy those of its opponents generally holds the "casting vote." As it was, therefore, in the Revolution, as it was even in the Napoleonic Wars and in the latter part of the War of 1812, so in the years between 1861 and 1865 on the coasts of the Southern Confederacy and in the open reaches of the Atlantic and the other oceans, sea power exerted a decisive influence.

The uses to which Northern sea power could be applied were chiefly in the blockade of the South and in all the incidental operations of isolating the South absolutely from the rest of the world, such as the capture of Southern ports and coöperation with the army in expeditions on Southern rivers. Secondly, the sea power of the Union must be ready for the entrance of a European nation or nations into the conflict, and, thirdly, it must scour the seas in search of Confederate commerce-destroyers, privateers, and foreign-built vessels, which, like the ships of Conyngham and Wickes in the Revolution, might try to hinder the freedom of maritime commerce and destroy the commercial prosperity of their enemies.

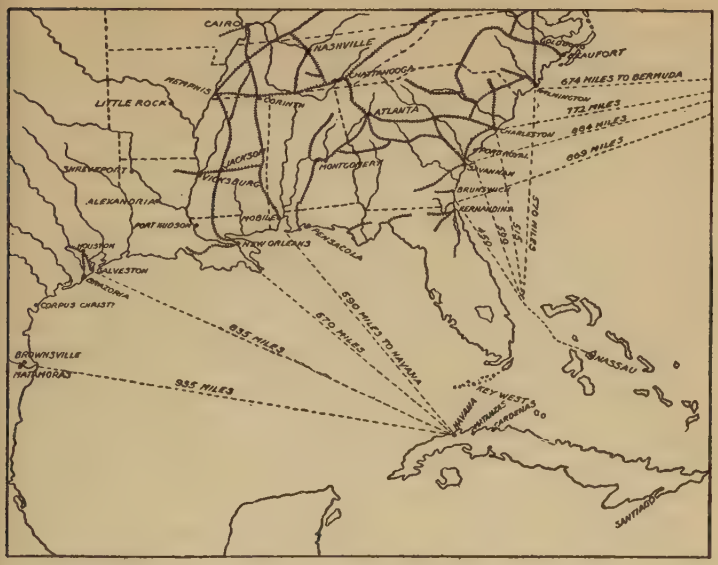
But the blockade was the preponderating strategy of the Union, to which all other movements were secondary. Indeed, it was the concentration on this object which is perhaps the most striking evidence of the military insight of such men as President Lincoln, Gideon Welles, his Secretary of the Navy, and Gustavus V. Fox, the latter's professional adviser. To this object was sacrificed, whenever necessary, the risk of European interference, the demands of army leaders insistent on making the navy merely a slave to land operations, and the need of Northern commerce for ships in which to carry on its trade.

A brief review of conditions in North and South will show clearly that no better plan could have been devised. The South was in no sense independent economically, even in the things which it needed for land warfare. Surrounded on every side by loyal states or the open sea, except for the remote and desolate plains where Texas and Mexico are separated by the Rio Grande, the Confederacy was well situated to be cut off from the essentials of warfare and national life by a vigorous blockade. There was little manufacturing in the seceded area, only five iron-works, and the raw material for these had always come entirely from Northern mines. There were, accordingly, no factories ready for turning out such necessary articles as guns, bayonets, cannon, or shells. Even the cotton, on whose cultivation the Southern people had concentrated their efforts, was not made into cloth on home soil but was exported to England, France, and the North to be manufactured into calico and cloth for the elegant Southern matron as well as for the rude negro slave. While the South was an agricultural region and raised food enough for its wants, the meat-raising sections were chiefly beyond the Mississippi, far from the battle-fields of Virginia, and

connected only by a few feeble railway lines and no navigable rivers.

Furthermore, the export of cotton was the very life-blood of Southern financial existence. More than a billion pounds went to England every year, a large amount to France, and much to the mills of Massachusetts and Rhode Island. In volume of export, in number of persons engaged in its cultivation, and in importance in determining the prosperity of the entire section, "Cotton was King." As it was a bulky article for export, it was all the easier for Northern blockading ships to interfere seriously with the most essential and influential factor in Southern prosperity. Cotton could not be consumed in the South, it was not an article of food, and only by exportation could it become of any value. Its use in the manufacture of explosives, which made it such a necessary article for Germany in the World War, had not yet been introduced.

From a more purely naval point of view the blockade was adapted to conditions in North and South. The Union Navy was small, utterly incapable by itself of closing more than a few ports, but the extent of maritime industry in the Northern States was so great that the deficiencies of the military navy could be quickly supplied. There were plenty of seamen in the North, shipyards were ready for constructing new vessels, and the coastwise steamers and ferry-boats were so plentiful in Northern waters that a very considerable force could quickly be collected and thrown around the Southern coast. Feeble as such converted merchant vessels would be in real battle, against unarmed ships and for the purpose of giving legality to a measure which simply required a ship of some sort every few miles, they were entirely adequate. Furthermore, in Southern harbors were few vessels which could be armed and sent out to attack this nondescript fleet with any real



THE SOUTHERN STATES SHOWING RAILROADS EXISTING IN 1860 AND ROUTES FOR BLOCKADE RUNNING

chance of success. The lack of shipping owned in the South left it entirely dependent on foreign assistance either in creating a navy or in exporting its products and in securing munitions and manufactures abroad.

Yet it was with almost unbelievable audacity that on April 19, 1861, President Lincoln proclaimed a blockade of the entire sea-coast of the Confederacy from the southern boundary of North Carolina to the extremest limits of Texas, "in pursuance of the laws of the United States and of the law of nations in such case provided." According to the figures given in Secretary Welles's report for 1861, on April 19 there were only eleven vessels at all available for blockade duty. Yet on April 27, 1861, the blockade was extended to include North Carolina and Virginia, and, on paper at least, the Confederacy along all its nearly three

thousand miles of sea-coast was cut off from communication with the outside world. Not till May 12th, however, was the first blockade-runner captured off Charleston, not till May 30th off the mouth of the Mississippi, not till June 5th off Mobile, and not till July 4th off Galveston. Indeed, the strict blockade of the Atlantic coast seems to have come last, for not till August 3d was any capture made off Wilmington, or till August 6th off the St. Mary's River, Florida. Furthermore, up to November 15, 1861, only one steamer had been caught running the blockade, and only one other steam vessel, a tug, taken from the Confederates.[1]

By October, 1861, however, the Union Navy had received reinforcements sufficient to produce a real influence upon Southern commerce. The war-ships laid up in navy-yards, except those at Norfolk, were fitted out and sent to sea. The various cruisers of the navy in the East Indies, on the coast of Africa, and in the Mediterranean were recalled, and soon placed on blockade duty. Merchantmen were chartered and purchased, mostly side-wheel steamers and propellers, and even city ferry-boats with their double ends and their unwieldy hulls and paddle-wheels were sent to patrol the inshore waters of the Confederacy and to do duty in Hampton Roads or the sounds of North Carolina. About fifty wooden sloops and gunboats, steam-powered and mostly with screw propellers, were ordered constructed. Over sixty old sailing-vessels were purchased, loaded with stone, and sent out to be sunk as block-ships in the entrances to Confederate ports.

To strengthen the blockade further,—"a primary object," as Welles wrote to Stringham, the commander of the Atlantic Blockading Squadron in May, 1861, the Union authorities planned joint military and naval expeditions to capture Southern ports and thus prevent such harbors

[1] *Report of the Secretary of the Navy*, 1861, pp. 145–151.

from being centers for contraband trade. Instead, these ports would afford bases for the blockading fleets, where supplies could be obtained and crews and ships restored to efficiency after the dull, incessant patrol. Hatteras Inlet, at the entrance to Pamlico Sound, was first captured, and soon afterward, on November 7, 1861, Port Royal, south of Charleston, fell before the skilful manœuvering and enfilading fire of a fleet under DuPont. This neglected harbor became the chief base for the Atlantic squadrons, and Pensacola, which was early recovered, became the base for the Gulf Squadron. In 1862 Beaufort Inlet and all the entrances to Pamlico and Albemarle sounds had been captured, St. Augustine occupied, and Fort Pulaski, which controlled the principal access to Savannah, made a Union stronghold. Thus on the Atlantic coast nothing remained to the Confederates except Charleston and Wilmington. On the Gulf coast, the mouths of the Mississippi, with the city of New Orleans, and several smaller harbors, had come into the possession of the Federal navy. Mobile and Galveston held out till 1864 and 1865 respectively.

By 1863 the only places where supplies could be received and sent on to the Southern armies were, thus, Wilmington and Charleston, and Mobile and Galveston. Before these ports, however, the Union forces seemed unable to produce results. During the first year of the war sailing-vessels and merchant steamers of ordinary speed had been the blockade-runners and had for all the diligence of the Union Navy managed to carry away a considerable amount of cotton. The statistics show that in 1861 816,000,000 pounds of cotton reached England from the United States; in 1862 13,500,000 pounds, and in 1863 only 6,000,000. Parts of these amounts doubtless came from the North, but they show that blockade-running existed at all times.

By 1863, however, the increasing effectiveness of the Federal blockade and the higher prices paid for cotton brought about the construction of specially designed blockade-runners. They were generally long, narrow vessels with paddle-wheels, with their deck only seven or eight feet above the water-line. The funnels were telescopic, and there were no lofty masts, as everything possible was done to make the ships indistinguishable. Painted gray and burning smokeless anthracite coal, they were able, with their great speed (twelve to seventeen knots), to outdistance any Union ships which discovered them, and they often slipped into Charleston, Wilmington, or Mobile without even being sighted. Their other terminus was generally Nassau, Bermuda, or Havana. It cannot be said that the blockading fleets ever suppressed these agile sea hounds, and they stopped their voyages only when they captured the sea-coast cities and so left them without ports. It is said that so difficult to capture were these special-service vessels that one passed into Mobile Bay while Farragut's fleet was preparing to make its memorable attack, and in the bombardment of Fort Fisher, at the entrance to Wilmington, another actually joined the Union fleet, and under cover of their smoke passed in safely. English shipping firms engaged in blockade-running as a regular business. British naval officers, many of whom later distinguished themselves in their profession, commanded the vessels, and the highest qualities of courage, seamanship, quick action, and engineering skill were called into play.

The blockade-runner operated on the most exact schedule, as it was necessary to arrive off the blockaded port at night, then pass round the end of the patrol squadron and proceed close alongshore where its outline would blend with the shadows of the land, and then on reaching the actual entrance to the port make a quick dash by the Union vessels

watching there, trusting to invisibility and speed for successful escape. The voyage out was generally more easily managed, as it could be timed for a dark period of the night, and after the positions of the Union ships in the offing had been accurately plotted. So superior to the nondescript blockading squadrons, which had to keep the sea for weeks without a chance for repairs, were these ships, that in one case mentioned in Taylor's "Running the Blockade" a blockade-runner passed by sixty-four Union vessels without being sunk or captured.

The United States, however, made the blockade effective by stiffening its interpretations of international law and holding that articles obviously destined to be carried into the Confederacy in violation of the blockade could be captured at any point on their journey. In pursuance of this policy, Federal naval officers boarded vessels bound for Matamoras, Mexico, as for instance the *Peterhoff*—which was captured at St. Thomas—and seized the cargo as contraband and in violation of the blockade, because Matamoras was just opposite Brownsville, Texas, across the Rio Grande, and afforded an easy entrance to the Confederacy from Mexico. Furthermore, they boarded neutral vessels bound for Bermuda and Nassau, places which before 1861 had little trade with Southern ports but which became flourishing centers of commerce as soon as the blockade was declared.

In other controversies as to ultimate destination of commodities the United States also extended the reach of its blockading force. In 1862 the *Bermuda,* a British steamer, sailed from Liverpool, stopped at Bermuda, and sailed from there for Nassau, where, according to the statements of her agents, a return cargo to Europe had been provided. Just before reaching Nassau, however, she was stopped by the Union steamer *Mercedita,* a prize-crew was

put on board, and the ship was sent into Philadelphia. The Federal attorneys, when the case came before the prize-court, maintained that the cargo was clearly intended to enter the Confederacy in violation of the blockade. Furthermore, they insisted that the stop at Nassau was only a pretext and that the ship was intended for running through the blockade as it had done the year before. In the end both ship and cargo were condemned. It is little to be wondered at that ship-owners protested against such action, but the North held its ground, and the doctrine of ultimate destination became a fairly well-established article of international law.

Similar was the case of the *Springbok*, a neutral vessel bound from London to Nassau and of too great draft to enter any Southern port. When one hundred and fifty-six miles from her destination in February, 1863, she was boarded by the Union cruiser *Sonoma* and sent in as a prize. While she carried only a little contraband, it was evident that her cargo had the Confederacy as its ultimate destination. It was impossible to prove this in a legal way; nevertheless the Northern prize-court, although it released the steamer, condemned the cargo.

Other measures against which the British Government protested, but without shaking the determination of the North to institute a real blockade and bring about the exhaustion of Confederate necessaries of war and trade, were to refuse all vessels clearance from New York to Nassau, to open mail-bags on British steamers, and to seize virtually every steamer in West Indian waters that might be in any way assisting in supplying, directly or indirectly, the armies of Lee and the economic life of the seceded states. Although Great Britain filed claims for the illegal seizure of 478 vessels, 181 of which were allowed by the arbitrators after the war, the object sought was attained, and the

blockade was made absolute,—the only condition on which it could be of decisive benefit to the blockading power.

The stubborn determination of the Federal Government to stamp out every attempt to break the blockade and defeat every step toward securing recognition or intervention by European governments is seen in many incidents in which war with England was risked, sometimes unwisely. The case of the *Trent* is perhaps the best known. Captain Wilkes of the Federal steamer *San Jacinto* stopped the British mail steamer *Trent* off the northern coast of Cuba in November, 1861, and took off two Confederates, Mason and Slidell, who were proceeding from Havana to Europe to secure the assistance of the English and French governments. Wilkes, who was the well-known discoverer of the Antarctic continent, regarded these gentlemen as contraband, which shows how wide a gamut the word ran in the minds of Northern sympathizers, since the term had never been applied to persons except by General B. F. Butler, who had shrewdly started the term contraband as describing the legal status of the negroes who entered the Union lines. The arrest of Slidell and Mason was universally applauded in the North, but Seward and Lincoln saw the danger of reviving the issue of impressment, on which England and America had taken opposite sides in 1812. The commissioners were accordingly released and sent to England, but several of the European powers, already stirred by the way the blockade was interfering with their commerce, and inspired partly by unfriendly feelings which had remained from the numerous disagreements of the past, were almost ready for at least the recognition of the Confederacy, and perhaps for a declaration of war. The British Navy was mobilized, and troops were sent to Canada, some of whom were unluckily forced into Portland, Maine, by the freezing of the Canadian ports and

had to request permission to pass through the United States. This request was smilingly granted.

But the fact that American restrictions upon neutrals affected commerce, not lives, and the deep and almost universal feeling in England that the cause of the South was the cause of slavery, prevented any final move for intervention. Palmerston, also, expressed what was after all a prophecy when he said that the restrictions the United States imposed on neutral trade might be of great advantage to England in some future war. Thus England by accepting the practice of the North and not intervening profited in 1914,—when the United States, not England, was the neutral,—by all the precedents of the Civil War to justify her limitations on commerce with Germany through the neutral countries of Holland, Italy, and Scandinavia. The Federal Government staked its all on the blockade. Incessantly, remorselessly, the cordon tightened. For example, salt cost $1700.00 in the Confederacy when it could be purchased in Nassau for $7.50; while cotton in Liverpool was worth ten times as much as it was on the wharves of Charleston. As the Union forces about Chattanooga gradually cut all the railway lines from the West, the armies in Virginia had to be supplied with food by the blockade-runners, and much beef came in by way of Wilmington, which had direct railroad connection with Richmond. When Wilmington fell in January, 1865, the doom of Lee's dauntless band of fighters was sealed. Without supplies, and with Grant's ever-increasing hordes battering them steadily backward, there was no alternative except surrender. The blockade had won its objective. It had throttled the Confederacy and choked secession. It had proved to be the decisive instrument of Federal sea power in its operations during the war. As Admiral Mahan declared, "Never did sea power play a greater or a more

decisive part than in the contest which determined that the course of the world's history would be modified by the existence of one great nation, instead of several rival States in the North American continent.'' [1] The blockade was, to quote again from the same author, ''the paramount function of the United States Navy during the Civil War, dealing probably the most decisive blow inflicted upon the Confederacy.'' [2]

[1] Mahan, *Influence of Sea Power upon History*, p. 44.
[2] Mahan, *Sea Power in Its Relations to the War of 1812*, I. 287.

CHAPTER XVI

THE MONITOR ESTABLISHES UNION CONTROL OF THE SEA

THE importance of the naval operations of the Union in winning the war against the seceding states is probably too little appreciated by Americans of the present generation. They accept, without realizing the significance, the fact that the blockade was declared and maintained through four long years of unceasing naval effort. They do not realize that during all that time the Union Navy suffered no defeat of any seriousness, and they fail to contrast this with the serious reverses suffered by the Union land forces before Lee surrendered at Appomattox. And it is hard to realize the damaging effects even one such defeat at sea would have had. The breaking of the blockade at any one point might have negatived the effectiveness of the whole; its success depended on the absolute exclusion of the Confederacy from outside intercourse. Two dangers to the blockade existed, both interrelated,—the danger of intervention by European governments, especially England and France, and the danger that the sea power of the Confederacy, created in Southern harbors by the enterprise and ingenuity of ex-Federal naval officers or supplied by the construction of ships in English and French shipyards, would break through the cordon and nullify the blockade or threaten Northern commerce and Northern cities. Especially was there a possibility that Southern ironclads might be built either in the Confederacy or in

European shipyards and become decisive factors in breaking the supremacy of the North at sea.

As has been seen, the first of these dangers was much more real than many Americans of the time realized. But it was from France much more than from England that it came. Louis Napoleon, with his constant ambition to be the arbiter of international affairs, as witness his interference in Italy in 1859 and his disastrous strokes in 1870, was anxious to involve France in the changing movements of New World politics, and while he preserved an official and formal neutrality, he constantly suggested intervention, and in 1861 actually did intervene in the affairs of Mexico, sending a military expedition in which he persuaded England and Spain to join, though the latter two soon withdrew their support. As early as May, 1861, the French Minister at Washington advised his government to intervene by raising the blockade, and in the summer of 1861 Louis Napoleon officially asked England to cooperate with him in recognizing the South and opening the Southern cities to trade. Napoleon even went so far as to state that he was ready, in coöperation with England, to send a fleet to the mouth of the Mississippi and demand free egress and ingress for merchant vessels. As late as July, 1862, Napoleon stated to Slidell that Europe should have recognized the Confederacy in the summer of 1861 when Washington was threatened with capture and the Southern ports not yet all closed.

It was in opposing just such projects, disastrous as they would have been to the Union cause, that Federal sea power found one of its great values. Only a fleet able to threaten the destruction of European naval forces, many of which were already in the Gulf of Mexico in connection with Napoleonic intervention in Mexico, would prevent the success of such an undertaking once it had been started.

It was in fulfilling this mission as well as in defending the Union from assault from within the Confederate lines that the *Monitor* and the other vessels of that type played a decisive part in the Civil War. Just as the increasing number of blockading ships which a maritime nation like the North could supply by intensified efforts stopped the danger of intervention by England and made her recognize the blockade as legal, so the ironclads of Ericsson in the later years of the war were the strongest factors in cutting off from the Confederates their final hope of succor, the intervention of Louis Napoleon.

At the beginning of 1862, almost a year after the firing on Fort Sumter, the Federal Government was unprepared for any real opposition to European intervention. Though the use of iron in ship-building was then at least thirty years old, and an iron screw steamer, the *Great Britain*, had crossed the Atlantic in 1845, there was not, except for a small gunboat on the Great Lakes, a single iron ship in the United States Navy. And despite the fact that in 1861 France had three armor-plated steam frigates on the sea, two more launched, and twelve building, and Great Britain five armor-clads in commission, five launched, and eleven under way, there had not yet been even an attempt to apply iron as armor to any American ship. The Union Navy would therefore have been essentially powerless against either of those nations in any conflict such as had seemed probable during all the first two years of the war. While the legality of the blockade was still an issue, the *Trent* Affair stirred up European animosity, and the scarcity of cotton in the mills of Birmingham and Rouen was creating hunger among the working classes and tension among the diplomats.

The Confederates, however, partly because several of

their leading men were progressive, and partly because they had no ships of war and needed to gain victory not by slow preparation but by brilliant and rapid action, early adopted the plan of utilizing the advantages of iron-armored ships, so thoroughly demonstrated as successful in the Crimean War. Mr. Mallory, the Secretary of the Confederate Navy, had been chairman of the Senate Naval Affairs Committee before the war, and had been a firm advocate of the new ideas of steam and iron for naval construction. Less than a month after war broke out, he had urged the great advantage of an iron-armored ship and had stated, with truth, "Such a vessel at this time could traverse the entire coast of the United States, prevent the blockade, and encounter, with a fair prospect of success, their [the Union] navy."

In June several Confederate officers were directed to design an armored ship, but finding that the industrial resources of the Confederacy would be unable to furnish it quickly, they decided to convert the partly burned hulk of the screw frigate *Merrimac,* then lying in the Norfolk Navy Yard. Her hull was sound, her engine workable, except for rust due to standing in water for some weeks, and, as they aimed to construct a battery like the French and English ironclads, a regular ship with the sides protected with iron, the conversion of the *Merrimac* fell in with their ideas. The upper works were not restored, but, instead, a casemate of wood reinforced with iron was placed on the hull with sloping sides extending beneath the water-line. On the top of this was stretched an iron grating to allow ventilation and protect the gun-deck from falling projectiles. The armament was of ten guns, far fewer than the usual frigate. The use of the heavy hull of the old *Merrimac* made the draft too great for manœuvering in the shallow

waters of Southern bays and rivers. Her draft of twenty-two feet and her inefficient engines cut down her speed to only five miles an hour.

The essential feature of the *Merrimac* was her armor. Following apparently the practices of the French and British, and verifying these by experiments of their own, the officers in charge placed four inches of iron on the sloping sides of the *Merrimac,* the same thickness which had been used on the floating batteries at Kinburn and which up to this time had not been pierced by any of the ordnance then in use. As a matter of fact a gun which Ericsson placed on the *Princeton* in 1842 had pierced four and a half inches of iron, but had been removed from the vessel when another gun, the famous *Peacemaker,* burst. But so far as the Union Navy in 1862 was concerned, there was no weapon likely to be used which could seriously threaten the invulnerability of the Confederate armor-clad.

Perhaps the Confederate officials, who were not entirely conversant with the defects of construction and lack of manœuvering-power, speed, and seaworthiness of the vessel, had too rosy hopes, but the fact that she was undeniably the only ironclad on the coast made them look forward to ending the war at once by a master stroke. Thus Mallory, on February 24, 1862, addressed orders to Franklin Buchanan, who had been appointed her commander,—orders which had in mind an attack on Washington:

> Could you pass Old Point and make a dashing cruise on the Potomac as far as Washington, its effect upon the public mind would be important to the cause. The condition of our country and the fearful reverses we have just suffered demand our utmost exertions, and convinced as I am that the opportunity and the means of striking a decided blow for our navy are now for the first time presented, I congratulate you upon it, and know that your judgment and gallantry will meet all just expectations.

And on the day before the first encounter, Mallory mentioned to Buchanan the project of steaming to New York and attacking and burning that city:

> Such an event would eclipse all the glories of all the combats of the sea, would place every man in it preëminently high, and would strike a blow from which the enemy could never recover.

Nevertheless, when on March 8, 1862, the *Merrimac* came slowly out from Norfolk into Hampton Roads, accompanied by five small steamers (one of which, the *Patrick Henry,* had some side armor), the Union forces in the Roads, consisting of some twenty different ships with nearly three thousand guns, felt no anxiety about the outcome. But as a matter of fact, they were all wooden vessels, had no armor, and only one, the *Minnesota,* was able to use steam for manœuvering. Furthermore, the *Merrimac* had been fitted with a ram,—a new and terrible weapon in naval warfare for some years afterward, which added to the terror of her invulnerability.

Proof as to the power of the new ironclad was not delayed for long. With cool deliberation she proceeded down upon the *Cumberland* and the *Congress,* good-sized sailing vessels each armed with more guns than the *Merrimac* could boast, and received their entire broadsides without the slightest damage. Then she rammed the *Cumberland,* and set fire to the *Congress* with her shells. The day ended when she retired to Sewell's Point for the night with the *Cumberland* sunk off Newport News, only her flags showing from her mastheads, and the *Congress* burning fiercely where she had run ashore and surrendered. Certainly iron had won a spectacular success over wood and, with the explosive shell, made the wooden ship or the side-wheel steamer as unsafe as a house of paper.

But just when the Union cause seemed lost, the long-

delayed counter-stroke of the Federal Government bore instant fruit. Although iron-clad vessels were well known, and the destructive effect of shell-fire on wooden vessels well recognized, for some time after the beginning of the war there had been no movement toward supplying the deficiency. Not till August 3, 1861, did anything really happen. Then authority was given by Congress for a board of naval officers to recommend some policy about constructing ironclads. Three officers of high rank were appointed, none of whom was familiar with the construction of iron ships, and none of whom knew much about engines. On August 29, 1861, Ericsson wrote to Lincoln, offering to build a vessel which would be able, ten weeks after the keel was laid, to "take up position under the rebel guns at Norfolk, and . . . within a few hours the stolen ship [the *Merrimac*] would be sunk and the harbor purged of traitors." And he said what at that time was certainly true:

> Steel clad vessels cannot be arrested in their course by land batteries, and hence our great city is quite at the mercy of such intruders, and may at any moment be laid in ruins. . . . It is not for me, sir, to remind you of the immense moral effect that will result from your discomfiting the rebels at Norfolk, and showing that batteries can no longer protect vessels robbed from the nation, nor need I allude to the effect in Europe if you demonstrate that you can effectively keep hostile fleets away from our shores.[1]

The board of naval officers did not share the confidence of Mallory and Ericsson in ironclads and made a very faint-hearted report. They mentioned the adoption of iron armor by European nations, but they were afraid it was unsafe for ocean-going vessels, although they conceded it might be a formidable assistance in coast and harbor de-

[1] Church, *Life of John Ericsson*, I. 246.

fense. The enormous weight of the iron depressed them; the power needed to propel the vessel when fully loaded with coal seemed to them too great for engines of their day to attain. They unequivocally contradicted Ericsson's statement that an armored ship could cope with a land fort of masonry, though they must have known the story of Kinburn. Then, assuming that four and a half inches of iron was the heaviest armor a sea-going vessel could safely carry, they finally recommended experimenting with three different types of armored ships. Besides Ericsson's, there was to be the *Galena* and the *Ironsides*. The *Galena* was to be plated with iron placed at a slight angle, just enough, it proved, for the enemy's fire from a bluff to hit it at right angles and do the most damage! The *Ironsides*, to be built in Philadelphia, was to be a wooden vessel with iron plates. The latter stood some of the fiercest fighting of the war, being hit more times than any other ship in the navy. She was to cost twice as much as either of the other two. Finally, they recommended building a floating battery, designed on a novel plan, but one which they thought would render it shot-and-shell-proof. They were very apprehensive of its seaworthiness, but as they desired especially light-draft ships that could manœuver in shallow water, the plan appealed to them. So they urged that the builders be forced to guarantee success or lose all their investment.[1]

The chances of disaster to the Union cause were never perhaps so great as during the days of the deliberation of this board. Ericsson had not been popular with the naval service since his building of the *Princeton*. His mind was too fertile, his thoughts too bold for the severely practical and generally conservative temperaments of the officers then in authority. They had been born and trained

[1] *Report of the Secretary of the Navy*, 1861, pp. 152–6.

in the epoch of sail and wood; he was of another era entirely and had for their cherished beliefs and inclinations only ridicule and scorn. It is said that Ericsson was persuaded to offer a design to the board only by the subterfuge of a friend, so convinced was he that anything he proposed would be rejected. But when he arrived in Washington and exhibited his pasteboard model, especially designed for showing the principle of the revolving turret, opinion was favorable and was well expressed by Lincoln, in his humorous way, at one of the conferences: "All I can say is what the girl said when she stuck her foot into the stocking, 'It strikes me there 's something in it.' " When later the Government exacted a guarantee of success, one of Ericsson's partners became disgusted and almost prevented the contract from being consummated.

Indeed, if Ericsson had followed the advice or the orders of the Navy Department, the *Monitor* would never have met the *Merrimac* on March 9, 1862. Although he went ahead and started the manufacture of the plates for the ship before the contract was signed, there were numerous delays. Even the dilatoriness of the Government in meeting the payments it promised delayed the vessel, because otherwise more men could have been put to work at night. When her trial trip came off, the rudder was found to be overbalanced. If the naval authorities had had their way, she would have been put in dry-dock and fitted with a new rudder, thereby losing a month of time. But Ericsson, asserting his ownership of the vessel, made a change in the steering-gear which remedied the fault sufficiently.

The *Monitor,* like the *Princeton,* but to a greater degree, was solely the product of Ericsson's brain. The hull, turret, engines, and all other parts were designed by the great inventor. As he wrote to General McClellan in 1877, "The entire labor of preparing the original working plans was

Log of U. S. Steamer "Monitor" Lieut. J. L. Worden Comdg

Sunday March 9th

Comes in fine weather & calm
At ½ past One piped all to quarters, hove up
Anchor, At 2 PM came to Anchor again

Geo Fredericksen

4 to 8 PM fine weather & calm, at Sunrise saw
3 Steamers lying under Sewals Point, Made one
out to be the Rebel Steamer Merrimac, At 7.20
got underweigh & stood towards her & piped all
Hands to quarters,

J. Wasson

From 8 to Meridian fine clear weather, the Rebel
Steamers advancing & opened fire on the Minnesota
& 7.20 opened fire on the Merrimac, from that time
until 12, constantly engaged with the Merrimac

Louis Snyder

From Meridian to 4 PM Clear weather.
At 12,30 rifled shell struck the Pilot House severely
injuring Commander Worden. 1 PM the
Merrimac hauled off in a disabled condition
Stood towards the Minnesota & Monitor on board
Asst Sec Fox of the Navy 2 PM Capt Worden
left for the Minnesota in charge of Surgeon Logue
&c.

Geo Fredericksen

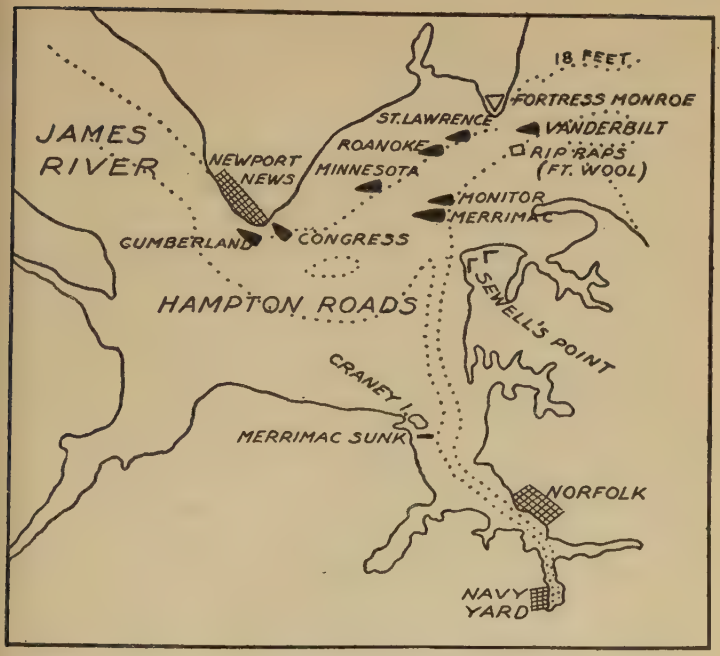
4 to 6 PM fine weather I came to Anchor
alongside the Minnesota.

J. Wasson

FROM THE ORIGINAL LOG IN THE NAVY DEPARTMENT LIBRARY

performed by myself, every line being drawn by my own hand." In a vessel in which the only parts above the deck were the turret and the pilot-house, and where the deck was only just above the water-line, almost every feature of the old high-decked ship had to be revised. Ericsson's blower system was used for ventilation; the propeller, which was much nearer the surface than ordinarily because of the shallow draft of the vessel, had to be protected by an armored overhang, and the anchor instead of being placed on the deck was housed underneath it in a well, and operated from the inside of the ironclad to avoid danger from enemy fire. At least forty patentable contrivances were contained in the completed ship. Although the *Merrimac,* delayed much more than the *Monitor,* was out of dock and afloat by January 29, 1862, the *Monitor* did not get her trial trip till February 19th. As late as March 4th she was still at New York and just having her guns tested. On March 6th she left New York, and soon ran into a storm during which the waves swept over her deck and sent water through her blower pipes and under the edge of the turret. But by hard work on the part of her crew she weathered the storm. Thus narrowly again did the Union cause survive. During the night of March 8th she arrived inside the Capes, and her commander, Lieutenant John L. Worden, immediately reported to Captain Marston, of the *Roanoke,* who, disregarding orders to send her to Washington, directed her to remain to protect the Union fleet.

When the *Merrimac,* under Lieutenant Catesby Jones, appeared the next morning to complete the destruction of the Union fleet, she found "a strange looking iron tower, sliding over the waters" toward her. In the unsatisfactory engagement that ensued, the advantages of the *Monitor* were evident, but so was the invulnerability of armored ships even as crude as the *Merrimac.* Since the latter fired



HAMPTON ROADS SHOWING LOCATION OF FIGHT BETWEEN *MONITOR* AND *MERRIMAC*

From the *Century Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*, Vol, I, page 699.

shell entirely, she made no impression on the *Monitor* except when a shell burst so close to the sight-hole of the pilot-house that it broke one of the iron bars in two and partially blinded the commanding officer. But neither was the *Merrimac* seriously injured by the solid shot fired by the *Monitor*, although some of her outer plates were broken. Ericsson himself attributed this to the small charges of powder which the Navy Department ordered used in the two 11-inch Dahlgrens which composed the armament.

But the superiority of the light-draft Union vessel over the heavy-hulled *Merrimac* was at once apparent. Not

only could the *Monitor* assume any position she desired, even in water too shallow for the *Merrimac* to follow, but her revolving turret enabled her to fire a shot every six minutes, while it took the *Merrimac* fifteen minutes to be ready with a broadside. Consequently, when the tide began to ebb about noon, the *Merrimac's* commander, as the engine power of his vessel, never much at the best, was rapidly decreasing from the loss of her smoke-stack, feared she would run aground or be unable to get back to safe waters. He accordingly retired to the Elizabeth River, whither he was not pursued by his Federal antagonist.

The results of the battle were therefore not decisive, but the *Merrimac* never again got into action. She was burned when the Confederates abandoned Norfolk in May. But the general object of the building of the ship was frustrated; the *Monitor* barred the way to Washington and New York, and the blockade remained unbroken.

The results to the Union Navy were, however, important. A week after the battle Ericsson received an order to build six more monitors as quickly as possible. They were to be a third larger, and had one conspicuous difference: the pilot-house was to be on top of the turret, which had been Ericsson's original idea. They were to be armed with 15-inch guns. In all, thirty-five monitors of various designs and sizes were under construction within a year after the historic ninth of March. As the remainder of the war produced no duel between ironclads comparable with the *Merrimac-Monitor* battle, these new monitors fought usually against land fortifications and proved their worth in this respect as well. In the case of the *Montauk,* one of the first monitors constructed by Ericsson after his initial triumph, the ability to stand fortress fire was evidenced. In February, 1863, lying within range of Fort McAllister, near Savannah, and receiving the full fire of the fort, she sent

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THE *MONITOR* SHOWING DENTS MADE BY THE *MERRIMAC'S* GUNS

The officer in the straw hat is Captain Worden, at this time (July, 1862) recovering from the severe injuries to his eyes received in the battle

Courtesy of Mrs. T. H. Eastman

ONE OF PORTER'S MORTAR SCHOONERS AT NEW ORLEANS

shells into the Confederate blockade-runner *Nashville,* which was seeking shelter behind the fort, and quickly destroyed her. When the Confederates sent out the iron-clad ram *Atlanta* later in the same year to break the blockade on the Georgia-South Carolina coast, the monitor *Weehawken* discovered her coming out and at a range of three hundred yards penetrated her 4½-inch armor with the very first shot from her 15-inch gun. Thus the armor protection of every European ironclad was shown to be vulnerable.

Although the Federal navy, even with its ironclads, did not succeed in capturing Charleston, the monitors inflicted great damage and kept a large Confederate military force occupied till the end of the war. At Fort Fisher, the last resort for blockade-running, the monitors of Porter's fleet bore the brunt of the attack, and were stationed inshore of the other ships. It is said that only three persons were actually killed on board monitors during the entire war.

The demonstrated merits of the monitor type of war-ship, especially for coast defense, and in particular such performances as the *Weehawken's,* show clearly that Ericsson's novel ideas of 1854 and 1861 were sound and full of momentous meaning for sea power. If a vessel of the monitor type could endure the fire of the heaviest guns, and could by her revolving turret train her gun-fire in any direction without manœuvering, all naval vessels unprotected with armor would be mere charnel-houses, and iron-clad ships with fixed broadsides would be under great disadvantages in fighting such ubiquitous foes.

While putting the hull almost entirely underwater did not appeal to the European naval constructors, they did fully appreciate the advantage of the revolving turret. In fact, the device had dimly appeared in a turret invented by Captain Coles of the British Navy in the Crimean War.

But it was the success of the revolving turret on Ericsson's monitors that did more than anything else to give a real standing to the Coles turret. And it is worth noticing that with the advent of the World War and the demand for long-range guns for shelling enemy fortifications from seaward, the monitor idea was revived, and the ships constructed for this purpose did useful service off the Belgian coast. To the *Merrimac* and the *Monitor* and to the other vessels which followed the latter ship must be assigned important places in any history of American sea power. The *Merrimac* brought back the ram into prominence for a good many years; the whole course of events connected with these ships firmly established the obsoleteness of the wooden ship, and the revolving turret of the *Monitor* introduced into the navies of the world a feature of naval architecture that has made possible the development of the battle-ship and the dreadnought.

In its effect on American history, the fight between these two new naval giants was also momentous. The blockade was preserved, intervention by European nations was discouraged, and in 1866 the existence in the North of a naval force flushed with victory after four years of strenuous service and overwhelmingly superior to any which could be brought against it, spelled inevitable defeat for the French invasion of Mexico and the violation of the Monroe Doctrine. Had it not been for Ericsson's monitors, Napoleon might have fostered in the New World an empire which would have checked entirely that expansion of the United States into the Caribbean which has been so important a feature of American development in the last generation.

CHAPTER XVII

CONFEDERATE SEA POWER STRIKES A DEADLY BLOW AT THE AMERICAN MERCHANT MARINE

WHENEVER a nation has found itself outclassed upon the sea, as did the South at the beginning of the Civil War, it has generally availed itself of the weapon of the weaker sea power; it has harassed and attempted to diminish, if not destroy, the maritime commerce of the enemy. In the past, as we have seen in the American Revolution and in the War of 1812, the popular method has been privateering, based on the issuance of letters of marque and reprisal to private individuals, who thereupon are invested with authority to seize enemy vessels and property upon the seas. As all the risk lay with the individual, so all the profit was his. No nation has ever carried this method of warfare so far as America. It is said that during the Seven Years' War there were eleven thousand American colonists engaged in privateering and we have seen that during the Revolution the privateersmen were far more numerous than is easily believable. In fact, privateering both in the American Revolution and in the second war of independence was much more popular than service in the regular navy.

It was not, therefore, surprising that as soon as the Confederacy started to resist the naval attack of the Union, it adopted commerce-destruction as its chief instrument of sea warfare. The South was so much the inferior sea power that it had no navy, and had no means of starting a

merchant marine. But the Northern States from Maine to Maryland were distinctly maritime in their interests; much more than is usually realized, the chief activity of the Atlantic seaboard was seafaring or occupations allied with, or dependent upon, maritime life. Manufacturing, while important, had far fewer years of history behind it; since the early colonial days and hardly without suspension, the states north of the Chesapeake had given themselves to the sea and ocean commerce. The clipper-ship era was at its height in America at the beginning of the Civil War; the largest tonnage under the American flag in the foreign trade came in 1861. American ships traded with the West Indies, which were now thoroughly open to American vessels; with California and Australia, the new El Dorados of the time; with South America, which was now entering on some years of stable government; and with every other profitable market of the European continent and the Pacific seas. On every trade route and on every fishing-bank and whaling-ground the sails of American ships were seen.

Here was a vulnerable spot where the Union might be struck a blow that would check its enthusiasm for war,—a war which many a Northerner felt was unfortunate and unwise, silent though he might be for fear of unpopularity and persecution. The merchant marine of the North, especially that part that left the protection of its coasts, consisted chiefly of sailing-vessels, which could be easily overtaken by steamers of almost any speed. The blockade of the Southern coast demanded every war vessel the Federal Government could muster, and few really effective vessels would be likely to be detached to pursue far-scattered privateers and naval commerce-destroyers.

The attempts of the South to commission privateers had considerable success, and the coasting-vessels from New England to the West Indies were captured in some num-

bers in the early part of the war. But the supply of suitable Southern vessels was small, all were sailing-craft, and the presence of more and more Union steamers on the Southern coast became so menacing that this form of warfare soon ceased. Unless privateers could bring their prizes into home waters or dispose of them in neutral ports, there was little profit possible. These circumstances, rather than the growth of international feeling against privateering, as expressed by the Declaration of Paris in 1856 (which declared it abolished) were the prime factors in the result. The fact that the United States had been the only principal power to withhold its signature to this agreement was another case of the irony of history.

With no vessels in Southern ports for conversion into war-ships, the only resource of the Confederacy was to buy them abroad or have them constructed there, for Southern shipyards in which the work could be done did not exist. Various Confederates of naval training and experience were accordingly sent abroad to create in England and France a fleet of commerce-destroyers which should be let loose upon the defenseless Northern sailing-vessels and deprive the North of a continuance of the wealth which its ships had brought it in the past. The chief of these men was James D. Bulloch, a former officer of the United States Navy and the naval representative of the Confederacy in Europe during the whole Civil War. Other officers followed him and other objects were added, such as the construction of ironclads to break the blockade, but the primary purpose of the mission was to secure ships for commerce-destruction.

Although there was considerable sympathy with the Confederate cause in England, and perhaps more in France, where Napoleon III did not disguise his personal interest, both governments issued neutrality proclamations, and

these bore hard upon the project of securing commerce-destroyers abroad. Although both belligerents could buy abroad all the arms, cannon, powder, uniforms, and food supplies they wished, and could transport them openly out of the country, so long as they were willing to assume the risk of capture by the enemy, yet when it came to ships, the case, curiously enough, was quite different. Ships themselves could be bought freely, but the construction and equipping of a vessel of war in a neutral country was not allowed by international law. In England, the Foreign Enlistment Act made such offenses cases for which the ordinary courts could punish either Englishmen or foreigners residing in the country. The essential element which must be present, however, in every act which made a person liable to prosecution was the *equipping* of a ship with *intent* to cruise against a friendly state.

It is obvious that the interpretation of these words will vary with the circumstances of the case, and that there will be almost surely disagreement as to their meaning. During the war the British Government was necessarily the arbiter in the matter, and during the first year of the conflict construed these words according to their letter to the advantage of the South; in the latter part of the war it construed them according to the spirit of the law to the disadvantage of the Confederacy. As a result, some ships were allowed to proceed to sea in the first period, although everybody knew that they were intended as Southern raiders. In the latter period ships were so hampered and delayed that with one exception they were of little use to their new owners.

The first vessel Bulloch had built was the *Oreto,* or *Florida,* as she was later and better known, a wooden screw steamer with auxiliary sail power. She was built on almost the very lines of a British gunboat, but as when ready to

sail she had on board no war equipment, no guns, no ammunition, and no Confederate crew, she was regarded as not equipped as a vessel of war and was allowed to depart. After her equipments for warfare were transferred to her in an unfrequented part of the Bahamas, whither they had come from England on a separate vessel, she was commissioned a naval unit of the Confederacy and put under the command of Captain J. N. Maffitt, another ex-officer of the United States Navy.

The second vessel to leave English shipyards in the attempt to harass Union commerce was the *Alabama,* or *No. 290,* as she was called during construction, or the *Enrica,* as she was christened when launched. Like the *Florida,* the *Alabama* was an auxiliary, screw-propeller steamer of wood. She was bark-rigged, with a fore-and-aft sail below the topsail on each mast. In every way she was a superior ship, equal in the quality of her construction to a vessel of the Royal Navy. She was coppered, and had a brass screw, which was fitted with a device by which it could be lifted out of the water when sails alone were being used, and in her iron bunkers she had room for a considerable amount of coal. Thus she was well fitted to cruise for long periods without supplies and docking,—a very important consideration in a commerce-raider which had only uncertain neutral ports wherein to secure coal and make necessary repairs.

The method by which Bulloch managed to get the *Alabama* constructed and to sea was the same as in the case of the *Florida.* He ordered the ship from the Lairds of Birkenhead, the best-equipped builders in the United Kingdom, as if securing a vessel for his private business. No mention was ever made to the builders of the purpose of the cruiser. When ready for sea she was taken out into the Mersey for several trial trips, with guests on board

and colors flying, and from the last of these she never returned. The guests were sent back on a tender; the crew already on board signed for a voyage to Havana or intermediate ports. Although the ship sailed without a clearance, this was claimed by Bulloch to have been perfectly legal in the case of a new vessel to be delivered in another country. Bulloch later denied that when she sailed from Liverpool on July 29, 1862, he already knew of the decision of the Crown lawyers that she should be detained until her destination was ascertained.[1]

Meanwhile, a sailing-vessel had left London for Terceira in the Azores with guns, ammunition, cutlasses, clothing, and all the necessary stores for a ship of war,—a perfectly legal proceeding. In the Bay of Praya the two ships met, and the guns of the *Alabama* were installed, and the ammunition taken on board. Before this was finished, the steamer *Bahama* arrived with Captain Raphael Semmes and a group of officers and men for the *Alabama*, and a considerable number of the original crew agreed to remain even when the belligerent mission of the vessel was publicly announced to them. After the ships had moved out from land beyond the three-mile limit on August 24, 1862, the Confederate flag was hoisted at the *Alabama's* peak, and with cheers from the crews of the ships present the most famous and destructive of the Confederate commerce-destroyers started on her long cruise.

In the despatch of iron-clad vessels for the Confederacy Bulloch was not so fortunate, although he made elaborate arrangements with a Franco-Egyptian firm to appear as agents of the khedive in the transaction. But the purpose of the vessels could not be argued away, and the British Government, now somewhat more anxious to preserve the

[1] Bulloch, *The Secret Service of the Confederate States in Europe*, I. 260.

CRUISE OF THE *ALABAMA* 1862–1864

Note coincidence with sailing routes.

friendship of the North, finally solved the difficulty by buying the vessels itself. If they had passed into the hands of the Confederates they would have been indeed formidable opponents of any of the monitors, to which they were similar, for they were to be equipped with turrets (in this case of the Coles type), each containing two guns. Bulloch wrote on December 18, 1862: "I designed these ships for something more than harbor or even coast defense, and I confidently believe, if ready for sea now, they would sweep away the entire blockading fleet of the enemy." [1]

In 1864, however, Bulloch managed, though only by great dexterity, to fit out the *Sea King,* the last of the Confederate raiders. He arranged for an Englishman to buy the ship, ballast her with coal, clear her for Bombay, and give the captain power of attorney to sell her at any time after she left London. The vessel, which later took the name of the *Shenandoah,* was a wood-and-iron ship fitted with sails, auxiliary engines, and a lifting screw. About the same time that she departed a small screw steamer also sailed, this time not from London but from Liverpool, with freight and passengers for Havana. Her bills of lading and the tickets for the passengers were perfectly regular, but the innocent articles mentioned in the first were in reality guns and ammunition, and the names of the passengers on the tickets were fictitious and concealed crew and officers for a Confederate raider. Not till the *Sea King* reached the Madeiras did she become the *Shenandoah,* and not till the previous owner had had time to hear of the sale of his vessel and change the registry did the *Shenandoah* begin her depredations. So well was the scheme arranged that, though the U. S. S. *Niagara* and *Sacramento* patrolled off

[1] Bulloch, *The Secret Service of the Confederate States in Europe,* I. 394.

the Thames when she came out, they could not discover her identity.

In this struggle of the Confederacy to create a navy in foreign waters the most obvious reflection is that the success usually depended not upon international law but upon the state of public opinion. While public opinion in England was favorable Bulloch was rewarded for his skilful efforts. But when sympathy swung around to the North and the prospects of Confederate success dimmed, the British authorities turned against him and found it easy to interpret international law to suit their changing purposes. The vigorous efforts of Charles Francis Adams, the American Minister, must not be forgotten. At the critical moment when the Confederate rams seemed about to get away, Adams declared to Earl Russell, the British minister of foreign affairs, in words that have become historic, "It would be superfluous in me to point out to your lordship that this is war."

The careers of these few cruisers show both the insufficiency of the Federal measures against them and the devastation they wrought on the hitherto magnificent foreign commerce of the North and the merchant marine in which it was conducted. The *Sumter*, Captain Raphael Semmes, the first raider of any importance, was not a foreign-built ship but a converted coastwise steamer. Though slow under sail or steam, she slipped out of the Passes of the Mississippi in the very end of June, 1861, and eluded the *Brooklyn*, which was stationed off there. She then cruised about the West Indies without being caught by the Union steamer *Iroquois*, which several times sighted her, even blockading her at St. Pierre, Martinique. Crossing the Atlantic to the Spanish coast, Semmes secured numerous prizes, eighteen in all, before he was shut up in Gibraltar

by three Union war-ships and obliged to sell his vessel. In his cruise of about six months he had captured only eighteen merchantmen, but the knowledge that he was upon the sea paralyzed Union commerce and caused American sailing-vessels to be laid up or transferred to neutral flags. He also kept five of the fastest Union steamships occupied in pursuing him. Thus, the blockade was weakened at a time when it was most in need of enforcement.

The chief of the Confederate raiders, the one which kept the sea the longest and did the most damage to Union commerce, was the *Alabama,* commanded during her entire career by the same Captain Raphael Semmes, easily the most brilliant of the naval officers of the South who engaged in this work. In two ways he was especially well fitted for the task before him. As an officer of the United States Navy during the Mexican War he had shown courage and audacity while in command of a shore battery; before this, in the interval between cruises he had studied law and been admitted to the bar. He was therefore well fitted to deal with the legal technicalities arising on a commerce-destroyer which scarcely, if ever, sighted the coasts of the country whose flag it bore, and which needed to utilize many a detail of international law in seeking shelter, supplies, and coal in neutral ports and in eluding capture by the very brilliancy and audacity of its movements.

When the *Alabama* was commissioned at the Azores in August, 1862, the *Sumter* had been shut up in Gibraltar for several months, and Union merchant captains had become bolder. They did not suspect the presence of a raider in the very vicinity of the cross-roads of the Atlantic, the stretch from the Azores to Brazil, and close by the frequented whaling-grounds off the former islands. After capturing ten vessels in three weeks, Semmes, who believed in appearing in a new locality just when news of his pres-

ence in the old would have reached the United States, worked his way across to Newfoundland, and in this well-traveled region found no Northern scouts but many Northern merchant vessels. From here he darted to the West Indies soon after the beginning of November. By reading, as he says, the shipping columns of the New York *Herald,* copies of which were captured on his prizes, he learned the movements not only of merchant vessels but even of the very war-ships sent to find him. In the West Indies he escaped from the *San Jacinto* by sending her off on a false trail, and captured the *Ariel,* a steamer bound from New York to Colon and crowded with many Americans, including five hundred women and children. As he could not take them on board the *Alabama,* he was obliged to let the vessel go under ransom.

From the papers on the *Ariel,* however, he learned of an expedition against Galveston being prepared under General Banks, an effort of the Federals to secure a foothold in Texas and thus block any junction between the Confederacy and the forces of the French in Mexico. Semmes, accordingly, sailed toward the Texan coast to interfere with Banks's movements. Nearing the blockading line, he decoyed out the side-wheeler *Hatteras* and sunk her with gun-fire in fifteen minutes. So well had he disguised his ship that when he allowed the *Hatteras* to overtake him, his reply, "Her Britannic Majesty's ship *Petrel,*" was answered only by the Union captain's "I will send a boat on board you." Thereupon Semmes, having secured a raking position, announced, "This is the Confederate States Steamer *Alabama,*" unfurled the Stars and Bars, and poured in a deadly broadside.

When Semmes was next heard of he was off the Canaries, in which section he took some twenty-four prizes. He then coaled off the Brazilian coast, effected a few repairs at

Cape Town, at the southern end of Africa, and struck boldly across the Indian Ocean for an assault on the American ships in the China trade. He returned by the way of Ceylon and Madagascar. Though this excursion did not produce great results in actual captures, he did find many American vessels laid up in Singapore, and thus useless to the Union. Another reason for his lack of success was that he was afraid of meeting the Federal steamship *Wyoming,* which had been sent to the East especially to watch for him.

The methods used by Semmes savored strongly of the dramatic. He hugely enjoyed luring Northern merchant captains on board his supposedly British cruiser and getting them to pilot him into difficult harbors, all the time uttering imprecations against that dastardly pirate ship, the *Alabama,* and her worse commander, the bucaneer Semmes. Then they discovered the truth and the fact that they were prisoners. Even in the judicial decisions which Semmes had to write before burning his prizes there is a touch of the ironical. The documents were in the severely legal style which Semmes's training as a lawyer enabled him to use, but the transparent efforts of Northern shippers to make it appear that the cargo was owned by British firms were dexterously pierced, and the decisions after being interlarded with references to works on international law and legal precedents, generally ended with the laconic phrase, "Cargo condemned."

After a cruise of nearly two years and the capture of over sixty-nine vessels, including the *Ariel,* ransomed, and the *Hatteras,* sunk, the career of the *Alabama* ended just outside the harbor of Cherbourg, France, on July 19, 1864. Semmes had a ship inferior to the *Kearsarge,* his antagonist, and, as it proved, his ammunition had deteriorated through long exposure to heat, but he came within an ace of ending his career by a more brilliant single-ship victory

than any other of the war and so placing his name beside that of Paul Jones by an action in almost the very waters where the latter had operated. If the shot from the *Alabama* which struck the stern-post of the *Kearsarge* had exploded, the Union ship could hardly have escaped disaster. But as it failed to explode, the *Kearsarge,* superior in speed, ammunition, and gunnery, soon riddled the *Alabama,* and she plunged stern foremost beneath the waters of the English Channel. Yet, as Semmes stated in a speech to his crew just before the battle, and with considerable truth, she had destroyed or driven to the shelter of neutral flags one half of the commerce of the Union.

Of all the Southern naval leaders Semmes stands alone in dash and intellect. For two years he had kept the sea without successful pursuit by Union war-ships and without receiving any assistance directly from the Confederacy. He had had to depend on supplies sent him from Europe and on the uncertain sympathy of neutral officials. The fact that he was obliged to destroy his prizes and was so successful in eluding capture made him perhaps the Confederate most detested by Northerners. It is also probable that the fact that his ship was built in England and that his crew was composed largely of Englishmen had its effect in stirring bitterness against him. Like Paul Jones, whose style of warfare he so closely parallels and whose versatility and love of the dramatic he seems to have shared, he was execrated as a pirate, though neither of them set their captives adrift in boats or destroyed life except in fair battle.

Gamaliel Bradford, in his "Confederate Portraits," has unearthed a passage from "Service Afloat and Ashore During the Mexican War," a book written by Semmes before he took sides with the South, in which Semmes, not foreseeing the developments of the next twenty years, declares

that a war-ship where a majority of the officers and crew are not citizens of the country whose flag it bears is no better than a pirate. But such a definition has never been accepted, and it was plainly only the acrimony of war and the absolute mastery he showed in handling international law and the stratagems of warfare that ever bestowed such a term on Semmes.

The career of the *Florida,* whose construction in England preceded that of the *Alabama,* did not really begin till January, 1863, by which time the latter ship had done most of its damage in the Atlantic. The *Florida,* meanwhile, had been lying in the harbor of Mobile completing her equipment. On January 16th she ran out through the blockading fleet at a speed of fourteen knots and began an extensive cruise in the West Indies, and especially off the North Atlantic coast of the United States. Her first prize in the West Indies was a ship homeward bound from China with a cargo worth a million and a half dollars. Except for a period of repairs in Brest, France, she cruised about the North Atlantic for over eighteen months and made many captures. Tenders which she converted from prizes made twenty-three in all, including the *Caleb Cushing,* a revenue cutter which was seized while peacefully lying at anchor in the harbor of Portland, Maine. The *Florida* herself captured a mail steamer only ten miles off the Delaware. After further cruising in the cross-roads of the Atlantic, the vicinity of the Azores and the Madeiras, Morris, her commander during the later part of her career, foolishly entered the harbor of Bahia, Brazil, unloaded his guns, and let half his crew go ashore. His confidence in the protection of a neutral port was soon shattered, however, for a few days later, on October 7, 1864, the Federal ship *Wachusett,* which was also lying there, rammed his

vessel, towed her out of the harbor, and carried her off to the United States. The Union authorities, it is true, disavowed the act, but the *Florida* never again flew the Confederate flag, for when she was about to be returned to Brazil her Union crew scuttled her at her anchorage in Hampton Roads. But already the *Florida* and her tenders had destroyed thirty-seven American vessels and effectively terrorized the American shipping between the United States and Europe.

Though the Navy Department was right in concentrating its efforts on the blockade, American commerce, carried on mostly in sailing-vessels, paid a heavy price in ships destroyed and trade turned over to neutrals. In 1860 two thirds of the commerce of New York was carried on in American bottoms; in 1863 three fourths was in foreign ships, and in 1863 alone 252,579 tons of shipping were transferred to the British flag, more than three times the amount of 1861.[1]

The only other important factor in the destruction of American shipping was the *Shenandoah,* which late in 1864 sailed for the North Pacific, and chiefly after the surrender of Lee but before news could reach those far-distant waters, captured and burned American whalers worth over a million dollars.

The justification for an organized warfare by armed ships against the defenseless merchant marine of an enemy is that by destroying his commerce one drains the very life-blood of his ability to make war, his economic and financial prosperity. Yet, as compared with an effective blockade, the results attained by commerce-destroying by cruising ships are almost negligible. Though the Confederate cruisers and privateers captured in all 258 vessels of a value of from

[1] Wilson, *Ironclads in Action,* I. 169. Note.

twelve to fifteen million dollars, they accomplished no vital military object. Their work did not prolong the war or bring pressure upon the North.

The virtual extermination of the American merchant marine has usually been charged to the Confederate raiders such as the *Sumter,* the *Alabama,* the *Florida,* and the *Shenandoah.* Though they exerted a strong influence in this direction, other factors have already been mentioned which undoubtedly shared in the result. The days of sail were over, and commerce was inevitably to adopt new methods of transportation. Steam navigation gave Great Britain, the leader in the manufacture of machinery, an important advantage. In the use of iron, which was rapidly coming into use, Great Britain likewise was first in her mines and foundries. Furthermore, the Union blockade had absorbed so much of the shipping of the North that it was natural for American ships to be withdrawn from distant trade routes. Besides, the opening of the territory beyond the Mississippi soon after the Civil War by the building of transcontinental railways, and the tremendous development of manufacturing in the Eastern States, diverted American energy and capital from maritime pursuits. In such a situation, the Southern raiders on commerce gave a finishing blow, which unfortunately did the South no good and the whole country much harm. It is fair to concede, however, that the American naval traditions of initiative, dash, indomitable enterprise under almost insuperable difficulties, and humanity in making war, were nowhere better exemplified than by the men who carried out the Southern warfare against commerce. Their exploits are, therefore, a part of the rich heritage of American sea power of all later generations.

CHAPTER XVIII

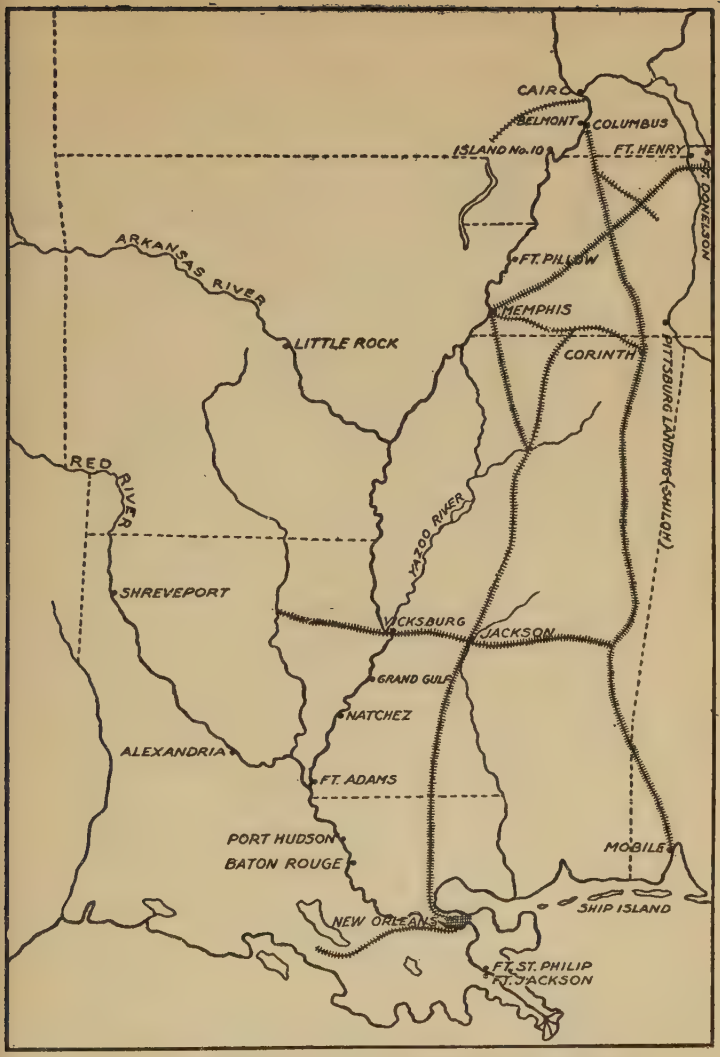
SEA POWER SPLITS THE CONFEDERACY IN TWO

THE achievements of Semmes and his fellow raiders on Union commerce, remarkable as these achievements were, were ineffective against the overwhelming sea power of the North, whose Navy Department in the first months of the war took steps to occupy the Mississippi River and New Orleans,—a city of 168,000 inhabitants, more than twice the size of Richmond and Charleston combined, and the chief seaport of the South. Down the mighty Father of Waters, with its tributaries greater in length than the Atlantic Ocean is broad, and tapping the richest valley in the world, a commerce flowed to New Orleans and thence to Europe which had contributed the bulk of the revenues of the Southern States. The commerce of New Orleans, which in 1860 amounted to $324,000,000, was paralyzed by the blockade during the first year of the war. Of cotton, the great article of export that furnished credits in Europe for the purchase of military equipment and munitions for the South, New Orleans had handled, in 1860, 2,255,448 bales, more than half of the whole crop of the Southern States for that year. Besides its great revenues, the Mississippi River in the hands of the South made possible the continuous streams of supplies from the quieter states of Louisiana, Arkansas, and Texas to the rest of the Southern States, whose agriculture was handicapped by the draft of their manhood for war. In a word, the Mississippi in the hands of the South was a vast

source of revenue; in the hands of the North it would be a great strategic line of communications for offensive military campaigns into the heart of the Confederacy, campaigns which well handled and under a unified plan of operation, as they later were under Sherman and Grant, might have ended the war in 1862.[1]

The occupation of the Mississippi and its tributaries was one of the three strategic plans which Gideon Welles, Secretary of the Navy, formulated early in the war. Assisted by his able professional adviser, Commander Gustavus V. Fox, Welles perfected plans in the autumn of 1861 for operations from Cairo southward and from Ship Island at the mouth of the Mississippi northward. Between these two bases, more than one thousand miles apart, if one followed the tortuous course of the river, Wells and Fox planned a gigantic undertaking under Flag-Officer Foote operating from Cairo and Flag-Officer Farragut operating from the Gulf. These two officers achieved wonders in taking and maintaining their fleets five hundred miles from their bases through a river whose current was at times strong, whose channel buoys were often destroyed, whose trained pilots belonged to the enemy, and on whose banks batteries overnight replaced those previously destroyed. The maintenance of the river flotillas and their communications was a difficult task. Foote had to exercise the greatest care, for a shot in the boiler or engine of one of his gunboats would have made her drift down-stream into the enemy's lines. Farragut on the other hand had to bring all his coal and supplies under convoy against the current and frequently under fire. His heavier-draft vessels often went aground in the season of low water; for his flotilla belonged to the deep-sea naval forces, while Foote's gun-

[1] Hosmer, *The Appeal to Arms*, American Nation Series, XX. p. 110.



NAVAL OPERATIONS IN THE MISSISSIPPI VALLEY

Showing railroads as they existed in 1860.
Adapted from the *Atlas to the Army Records of the Civil War*, Plate 135.

boats were of shallow draft and constructed on the lines of the river steamers.

Andrew H. Foote, who arrived at his base in September, 1861, supervised the ship-building race in the northern part of the river. Under Foote, J. B. Eads at St. Louis, working day and night, including Sundays, built in sixty-five days seven casemated iron-clad gunboats, of which the *Carondelet* later became the best known. These each had an armament of thirteen heavy guns and a speed of nine knots. Later, after the *Monitor's* fight, Eads built some turreted gunboats; while Charles Ellet in imitation of the South's experiment in the *Merrimac* produced his river rams, which he and his brother later commanded with marked success. On the other hand, the South attempted under great handicaps the building of rams and also seized some river steamboats; the latter became known as the River Defense Fleet. This force, worth mentioning only because it is typical of the lack of organization and coöperation of the Confederate military authorities on the Mississippi River, was under the control of the army. General Lovell, in command at New Orleans, voiced his faith in this River Defense Fleet in these words, "Fourteen Mississippi River captains and pilots will never agree about anything after they once get under way."

On the other hand, the Union naval and military forces under Foote and Grant worked together in harmony. The two branches of the service, army and navy, Foote once remarked, were "like blades of shears—united invincible; separated almost useless." Thus on February 2, 1862, Foote, leaving his base at Cairo, convoyed Grant's army up the Tennessee River for a combined attack on Fort Henry. On February 6th Foote's gunboats shelled and captured the work, before Grant's troops, impeded by bad roads and swollen steams, could get in its rear. Owing to Grant's

delay most of the garrison escaped to Fort Donelson, twelve miles away on the Cumberland River. These two forts occupied strategic positions for mutual support on the two rivers leading into the heart of Tennessee and Kentucky. Fort Donelson, situated on a bluff one hundred feet above the river, sent a plunging and destructive fire almost at right angles against the sides of the gunboats, but Grant's troops, again safely convoyed by the gunboats, defeated the Confederates the next day. Donelson surrendered on February 16th. The two successes had cost the South twenty-one thousand men,—a result brought about largely by Foote's thorough coöperation with Grant.

Shortly after the fall of Fort Donelson the Confederate troops on the Mississippi retreated from Columbus, Kentucky, to Island Number Ten, situated in an s-shaped bend in the river. Here General Pope sought to get in their rear and so cut their lines of communications, but he was unsuccessful until Commander Walke in the *Carondelet* of Foote's squadron on the night of April 4, 1862, lighted on his way by vivid flashes of lightning, ran the gantlet of the six batteries with their fifty guns without grounding in the twisting channel. Having performed what Mahan calls "one of the most daring and dramatic events of the war," Walke made it possible for the troops to cut off the retreat of the Confederate garrisons, who surrendered to Foote on April 7th,—the same day that Grant was fighting the battle of Shiloh on the Tennessee, where another division of Foote's gunboats helped to stave off serious disaster to Grant's whole army. Foote, worn out from hard work and suffering from a wound, was relieved on May 9th by Captain C. H. Davis. The latter the next day warded off a spirited attack by the Confederate River Defense Fleet at Fort Pillow, forced the surrender of Fort Pillow by bombardment on June 4th, and on June 6th

captured or destroyed all but one of the River Defense Fleet. The Northern naval commanders had cleared the river to Vicksburg and were ready to join forces with Farragut.

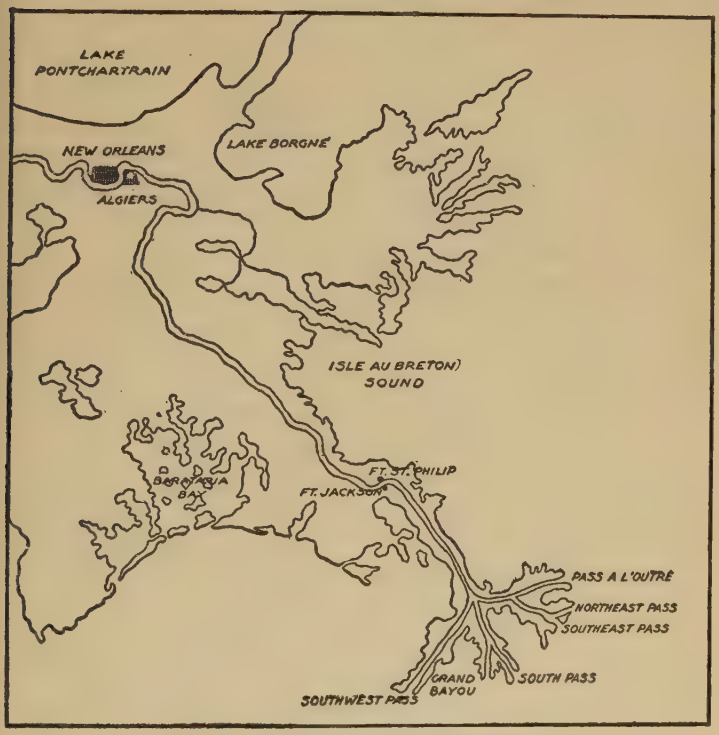
The work of the navy on the upper Mississippi and the Tennessee and Cumberland had made it possible for the army to save Kentucky and occupy western Tennessee,—results that caused consternation in Richmond and brought solace to the North for the defeats on the Potomac. After the fall of Donelson Oliver Wendell Holmes wrote Motley, the historian:

> Never was such ecstasy, such delirium of excitement, as last Monday, when we got the news from Fort Donelson. Why to give you an instance from my own experience, when I, a grave college professor, went into my lecture room, the class, which had first got the news a little before, began clapping and clapping louder and louder, until I had to give in myself, and flourishing my wand in the air, joined with the boys in their rousing hurrahs, after which I went on with my lecture.[1]

While Foote had been thus clearing the river from the north, Flag-Officer David G. Farragut was opening the river from below. Because Farragut was on record as the professional authority on the power of fleets against land fortifications, he had been selected by Fox to command the West Gulf Squadron for the contemplated attack on New Orleans. For this attack, which, unlike the northern Mississippi operations, was purely naval, Fox found in Farragut a man after his own heart, for the work required audacity and a willingness to cut loose from communications. Farragut instantly agreed with Fox that New Orleans could be captured without first reducing the two forts, Jackson and St. Philip, below the city, a project that

[1] *Motley's Correspondence*, II. 68.

seemed little less than foolhardy to Commander D. D. Porter, Farragut's able assistant, who argued for a reduction of the forts with mortar-boats before attacking New



THE MOUTHS OF THE MISSISSIPPI
Drawn from the *Atlas to the Army War Records*, Plate 176.

Orleans. By this very audacity of the older man, tempered with wise and careful preparations, the impossible became possible. The project required a quick and bold stroke before the Confederate authorities at Richmond—who believed that the Union would concentrate all its efforts on

the northern reaches of the river—could prepare adequately for a naval attack from the Gulf.

With Farragut's arrival in his flag-ship, the steam sloop of war *Hartford,* in February, 1862, the Confederates made every effort to strengthen their defenses,—which consisted of the two forts, Jackson and St. Philip, a log boom across the stream, and a flotilla of thirteen gunboats and two rams above this barrier. The forts mounted 126 guns, mostly of small caliber, 56 being the old fashioned 24-pounders. Fort St. Philip, situated at a bend on the left bank, could rake approaching ships. The barrier, at first of cypress logs,—four feet thick, chained together, and held by thirty anchors,—was broken by the spring floods and mended by means of anchored hulks and chains strung across them from bank to bank. The Confederates were handicapped by lack of skilled artisans and of tools and equipment—the latter a result of the tightening blockade of the sea power of the Union—for completing the powerful ironclads they were building, especially the *Louisiana,* which with good engines might have been a serious menace to Farragut's efforts to capture the city. Moreover, the Confederate forces suffered from lack of organization, discipline, and coöperation between army and navy and between state, city, and Confederate authorities. For example, four different naval officers who were successively in authority failed to coöperate with General Lovell, and the flotilla was made up of a heterogeneous lot of river boats, owned partly by the state, partly by the central government, and partly by citizens. Hence delay was the greatest need of the defenders and an immediate offensive the greatest aid of Farragut.

But with all the dash that Farragut manifested in the New Orleans campaign—a dash unusual for a man of his age—he was far from reckless; he realized fully the difficulties of attacking forts, especially under the conditions

now facing him. His half-century of professional service went back almost to the days of Nelson, when it was a common saying that one gun ashore was equal to a ship of the line. Always a most painstaking student of professional matters, Farragut had, during the attack of the French fleet in 1838 against the fort at San Juan de Ulloa protecting Vera Cruz, made careful observations and notes of the effects of the new type of shells hurled by the French bomb vessels. From these observations, though he had little faith in the result, he now authorized Commander Porter with the latter's mortar-boats, stationed three thousand yards below Fort Jackson, to make a preliminary attempt to reduce the forts. Accordingly, Porter fired all told from 13,500 to 16,800 [1] shells at the forts, but though he frequently hit them, he did not silence them. He succeeded in killing only 4 soldiers of the two garrisons of 1100 and in disabling only 7 of their 126 guns. With Farragut's fine differentiation between the practicable and the impossible, he, while not minimizing the great difficulties, had with his unusual determination set himself the task of solving them. One of his greatest difficulties had been the getting of his larger ships over the mud flats above the mouth of the river; it took him, for example, two weeks and five attempts to drag the *Pensacola,* finally through a foot of mud, into the deep water below the chain barrier.

Realizing then to the full the task before him, Farragut made thorough preparation for the passing of the forts. Of course, he had a powerful fleet and the great sea communications of the Union at the back of him. But so, too, the Allies in the World War in their disastrous attempt to pass the Dardanelles had a large fleet, supported by a sea power mightier than Farragut's, and the result the reader knows only too well. Farragut's squadron con-

[1] *Century Battles and Leaders,* II. 32, 72.

sisted of nine gunboats, seven steam sloops of war, and one large side-wheeler, seventeen in all, mounting 154 guns, many of them rifles of great power for that day. Seeing that Porter was making no serious impression on the forts with his shells, Farragut detailed Captain Bell and Lieutenant Caldwell on the night of April 20th to make a gap in the chain barrier. After much effort, Caldwell managed to work his gunboat above the barrier, then steaming upstream to get a good start, he turned and with the current and full speed of his engine rammed the *Itasca* against the barrier, tearing away several of the hulks and leaving a wide gap in the line. This being accomplished, Farragut ordered his captains to festoon the sides of their vessels with chain cables and cover the decks amidships with bags of ashes, coal, and sand, as improvised armor belts. Most of the captains also daubed the sides of their ships with river mud to render them less visible, and some whitewashed the decks to make guns and shot stand out in the darkness. To cover the passage of the fleet Farragut ordered Porter to moor some of his mortar-boats near Fort Jackson and concentrate their fire on the water battery of this fort. Having previously carefully explained to his captains his plan of action,—the important feature of which was a column formation in three divisions with the powerful sloops distributed in the van and center,—Farragut made a last-minute personal inspection of his fleet and gave the signal for the start at two o'clock on the morning of April 24, 1862.

The battle of New Orleans, as it is called, had two phases, —the passage of the forts and the destruction of the Confederate fleet. The passage of the forts was successful for all of Farragut's force except the last three gunboats, which owing to the darkness and smoke did not succeed in finding the gap in the barrier. Some of the larger units

like the *Pensacola* and the *Brooklyn* passed Fort St. Philip, the more formidable work, slowly, at times stopping the engines altogether, and pouring into the fort grape and canister at such close quarters that the sailors could see the soldiers running to cover or could exchange curses with them. The *Hartford* in passing was hit by a fire-raft, but Farragut, with that coolness characteristic of him in great emergencies, sheered off, sank the tug that was pushing the raft toward him, quickly had his well-disciplined crew extinguishing the flames already shooting up the rigging of the *Hartford,* backed her off the shoals under the guns of St. Philip, and all the time kept up a steady fire at the fort. During the passing of the fleet, the Confederate ram *Manassas,* running the gantlet of Farragut's ships, was skilfully avoided by a quick turn of the *Pensacola's* helm, but succeeded later in ramming the *Mississippi* and the *Brooklyn,* without serious damage to either.

Under this protection of Farragut's heavier ships, some of the gunboats, notably the *Cayuga* and *Varuna,* quickly slipped by and began an unequal contest with the Confederate flotilla above. The darkness and confusion were such that it was difficult to distinguish friend from foe. The *Varuna* was sunk. In this second phase of the battle, as the main fleet arrived above, the Confederate flotillas—a few of which put up a brave but useless fight—were all destroyed or captured. The *Louisiana,* whose engines would not work, played virtually no part in the battle. The *Manassas* was later blown up. The forts, on the severing of their communications by the fleet above, surrendered a few days later, as Farragut had predicted. New Orleans was his.

After destroying some batteries farther up the river, Farragut arrived off New Orleans at noon on April 25th, where he found that the inhabitants in a mad panic of

patriotism had set fire to great quantities of cotton and coal, some steamboats, and the *Mississippi*, an ironclad on the stocks, more powerful than the *Louisiana*. General Lovell had turned back the city to the mayor and had withdrawn with his troops. Farragut sent ashore to demand the surrender of the city two officers, Captain Theodorus Bailey and Lieutenant George H. Perkins, whose progress through the hostile city was like that of Nelson and Hardy through the streets of Copenhagen after Nelson's great victory over the Danes. George W. Cable, at the time a young boy acting as clerk in a New Orleans store, gives the following account of this incident:

> About one or two o'clock in the afternoon (as I remember), I being again in the store with but one door ajar, came a roar of shoutings and imprecations and crowding feet down Common Street. "Hurrah for Jeff Davis! Hurrah for Jeff Davis! Shoot them! Kill them! Hang them!" I locked the door on the outside and ran to the front of the mob, bawling with the rest, "Hurrah for Jeff Davis!" About every third man there had a weapon out. Two officers of the United States Navy were walking abreast, unguarded and alone, looking not to right or left, never frowning, never flinching, while the mob screamed in their ears, shook cocked pistols in their faces, cursed and crowded, and gnashed upon them. So through the gates of death those two men walked to the City Hall to demand the town's surrender. It was one of the bravest deeds I ever saw done.

As the Mayor would not haul down the flag, Farragut had to land some marines and order an officer to take it down. On May 1st General Butler and his troops arrived to hold what the navy had won.

Farragut was now ordered to complete the opening of the river and join Davis in the upper part. Aided by Porter's mortar-boats, he bombarded the batteries on the high bluffs of Vicksburg for two days, but without a large army to coöperate with him his bombardments were in

vain. He joined Davis above and the two coöperated in keeping the river open, but the difficulties were great. Farragut was five hundred miles from his base; the river was getting low, endangering his vessels; sharp-shooters were picking off his officers; masked batteries sprang up on all sides overnight, and his men in great numbers were contracting malaria. Finally realizing that Farragut could not patrol the Mississippi with definite results unless a large army coöperated with him, the Navy Department ordered him back to New Orleans. Before his return he and Davis planned for the destruction of a powerful ram, the *Arkansas,* building up the Yazoo River. Just as they were about to seek her, she came down, passed unscathed through the Union fleet, and took refuge under the batteries of Vicksburg. She was later burned by the Confederates to prevent her falling into the hands of the Union Navy.

In the autumn of 1862 Porter relieved Davis, who like Foote had been worn out by the arduous river work. In January, 1863, Grant arrived in person to command the large military force investing Vicksburg, the Gibraltar of the river. For nearly a year Porter and Farragut rendered to Grant and Sherman invaluable services in silencing batteries and in scattering the swarms of guerillas that made rapid movements with their field-pieces from a vast interior, appearing at spots along the tortuous stream to cut off transports with troops and steamers with supplies. Thus the navy maintained the army's communications, which were entirely by water. Under Porter's protection Grant was able to surprise the garrison by landing his army south of the town for a brilliant flank movement that culminated in the surrender of Vicksburg on July 4, 1863. "Never in the history of combined movements," declares Mahan in his "Life of Farragut," "has there been more hearty coöperation between the army and the navy than in

the Vicksburg campaign in 1863 under the leadership of Grant and Porter." Meanwhile Farragut, by blockading the mouth of the Red River, had cut off the beleaguered city from a great source of supplies. He also forced the surrender on July 9th of Port Hudson, a powerful post situated at a sharp bend farther down the river and intended to protect the communications of Vicksburg. "The Mississippi was now open from Cairo to the Gulf, and the merchant steamboat *Imperial,* leaving St. Louis on the 8th, reached New Orleans on the 16th of this month without molestation."[1]

By the opening of the Mississippi and the occupation of New Orleans the sea power of the Union had split the Confederacy in two. The Northern navy, by the ever-tightening blockade, had forged around the vital states of the Confederacy on three sides—the Atlantic, the Gulf, and the Mississippi—a band of iron, and it had provided the army an entering wedge on the northern side via Tennessee, from which Sherman could ultimately, by his historic march, divide the Confederacy still further and make his great flanking movement against the coast cities and Lee's armies.

In addition to this strategic result of the activity of the sea power of the Union, the capture of New Orleans, the greatest cotton mart in the world, had in the words of the historian James Ford Rhodes "a profound effect on opinion in England and France." At the very time that Farragut was attacking the forts of New Orleans, the French Emperor was promising Mr. Lindsay, a member of Parliament and a Southern sympathizer, that he "would at once dispatch a formidable fleet to the mouth of the Mississippi, if England would send an equal force, and that they would demand free egress and ingress for their merchantmen with

[1] Mahan, *The Gulf and Inland Waters,* p. 173.

their cargoes of goods and supplies of cotton which were essential to the world."[1] This project was nipped in the bud by Farragut's victory, as Mason and Slidell, the unofficial ambassadors of the Confederacy at London and Paris, reported after the battle. Slidell wrote from Paris, "If New Orleans had not fallen, our recognition could not have been delayed much longer." Mason, writing from London to Benjamin, Davis's Secretary of State and War, voiced a similar opinion in these words:

> The occupation of the principal southern ports by the enemy, and the increased rigor of the blockade of those remaining to us, resulting from it, give little hope now of any interference in regard to the blockade, and leave only the question of recognition.[2]

If, therefore, one may say in conclusion that the blockade was, as Mahan asserts, the most decisive single factor of the Civil War, the occupation of New Orleans and the resulting control of its great river by the sea power of the Union was the most important single phase of that blockade.

[1] *North American Review*, CXXIX. 346.
[2] Rhodes, *History of the United States*, III. 630.

CHAPTER XIX

SEA POWER AT MOBILE BAY

AFTER his victory at New Orleans, Farragut, promoted to the rank of rear-admiral for his work, proceeded to Pensacola, which became the base of the West Gulf Squadron when it fell back into Union hands in May, 1862. From here he directed the work of his district, extending to the Rio Grande, and by December, 1862, his forces had taken possession of all ports in the Gulf except Mobile. This was in accordance with the admiral's plans of drawing in the long blockade lines to the actual harbor entrances. Hence, also, after the completion of his work at Vicksburg and Port Hudson, Farragut kept urging the Navy Department to send him monitors and troops for an attack on Mobile Bay before the defenders of the port could complete their powerful iron-clad ram *Tennessee*. General Banks, the Union commander of the Department of the Gulf, also urged an immediate attack. But the Washington Government, worried by the machinations of the French Emperor, Napoleon III, in Mexico and Texas, had other plans.

Taking advantage of the war in America and in order to seat Maximilian, the brother of Francis Joseph of Austria, as Mexican Emperor, Napoleon had sent an army into Mexico which a month before the fall of Vicksburg had captured Mexico City. French consuls in Texas and at Richmond were intriguing to set up a republic in Texas as a buffer state between this new empire and the winner

of the Civil War. Napoleon's plans were not relished by either belligerent in the United States. The Confederate authorities expelled the consuls, and the Washington Government planned the ill-starred Red River campaign for the conquest of Texas, that Union control might be firmly secured before foreign intrigue could separate that immense territory from the United States.

In the summer of 1864, Banks's troops, after the failure of the Red River expedition, at last became available to help Farragut in his attack against Mobile Bay, the defenses of which had meanwhile been greatly strengthened, especially by the completion of the ram *Tennessee*. This casemated ironclad, whose timbers were still in the forest and whose armor belt still in the mines in the spring of 1863, was launched and brought down to Mobile the following winter for her plating and equipment. With her twenty-five inches of pine and oak covered with six inches of iron and with her six Brooke rifles she was the most powerful vessel built by the South. Despite Farragut's oft-repeated warnings and requests for monitors and troops during the spring of 1864, the *Tennessee* after two months' hard work was floated, by means of special constructed "camels," down to the lower bay, where she at once became the most serious menace to Farragut's wooden squadron in the Gulf outside. As this was the critical period of the great campaigns when Sherman and Grant in Tennessee, Georgia, and Virginia were trying to surround and isolate Johnston's and Lee's armies, it was imperative for the sea power of the Union to seal the port of Mobile, next to New Orleans the greatest cotton center and now the most important base for blockade-runners on the Gulf.

The *Tennessee,* whose commander, Admiral Buchanan of *Merrimac* fame, gave up his first plan of attacking Farragut outside and so breaking the blockade, had two defects, very

serious for her principal use as a ram. She could make only six knots, and her steering-chains by a blunder in construction were exposed on her deck instead of being placed beneath the armor. Her slow speed, therefore, rendered her ram easily avoidable and her exposed steering-gear made it possible to cripple her entirely. But even with these defects, she and the three gunboats Buchanan had were serious menaces to the Union fleet.

Besides this flotilla, the defenses of Mobile Bay included three forts, Morgan, Gaines, and Powell,—of which the first two, Morgan and Gaines, guarded the entrance from the Gulf on Mobile Point and Dauphin Island respectively. Of the three forts, Morgan by reason of its many heavy-caliber smooth-bores and rifles and its situation directly on the channel was the only one that was a real menace to a passing fleet. The entrance was further defended by a row of piles extending over the shoals east of Dauphin Island, and by a triple line of torpedoes across the channel to a red buoy, 223 feet from the water battery at Fort Morgan. If we omit the shoal water near Morgan, these obstructions left an opening of approximately 100 feet for blockade-runners. Of the defenses of Mobile Bay, however, the *Tennessee* and the torpedoes played the most important rôles.

The torpedoes, or more properly the submarine mines, moored across the channel, were either barrel-shaped or sheet-iron truncated cones, called tin torpedoes. The former were made of beer kegs, filled with powder, floated by means of wooden cones at the ends, and detonated by five sensitive primers projecting from the sides. The tin torpedoes were kept upright by an air-chamber, on the top of which was an iron cap, easily dislodged by a slight jar, which on dropping exploded the charge of powder in the lower part of the mine. These tin

torpedoes were poorly lacquered and corroded readily in the salt water. The mine field in July included 46 of the barrel type, 134 of the tin torpedoes, and possibly a few others to be exploded by electricity.

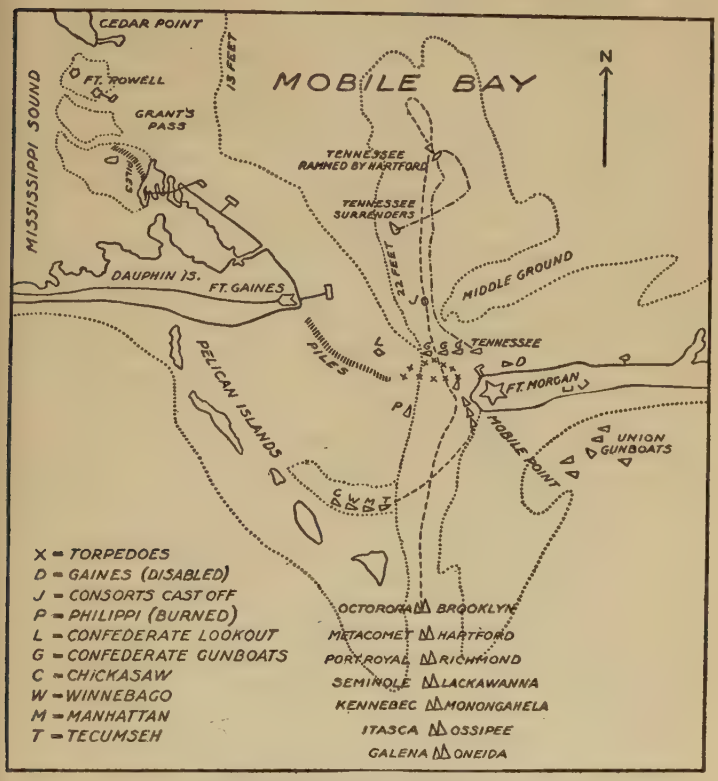
Toward the end of July, 1864, the troops arrived and disembarked on Dauphin Island for the attack on Fort Gaines simultaneously with the passage of Fort Morgan by Farragut's squadron. On August 4th the last of the four monitors—*Tecumseh, Manhattan, Chickasaw,* and *Winnebago,* the ironclads for which Farragut had waited for six months—arrived. The first two of these had 15-inch guns and the latter two 11-inch, but all were slow,—less than seven knots. The morning after the arrival of the last of the four, August 5th, Farragut planned to make what proved to be his memorable passage into Mobile Bay.

The admiral's plans were simple. The whole squadron of four monitors and fourteen wooden steam sloops and gunboats were to form in two columns, the monitors, slightly to the right, to protect the van of the wooden vessels, led by the *Brooklyn* and the *Octorora,* against Fort Morgan. The four ironclads were to pass very slowly, and as their turreted guns could fire in all directions, they could pour in their great solid shot at close range until the wooden ships had safely passed. The latter were to be lashed together, two and two, so that in case of injury to the engine of one, her consort could drag her along till past the fort and thus prevent her blocking the narrow channel. Besides these plans, Farragut calculated his start at flood tide to help carry his fleet by, and he hoped for a westerly wind to blow the smoke over Fort Morgan. As the tide is a known quantity and as the wind at this season at Mobile is generally from the west in the morning, Farragut's fleet began the attack at 7 A. M. on August 5th, with the conditions of wind and tide he had wished.

The battle of Mobile Bay had, like the battle of New Orleans, two phases,—the passing of the forts and the subsequent fight with the *Tennessee*. The wooden ships played no decisive part in the battle; indeed, they in each phase nearly caused disastrous losses to the Union flotilla. Notwithstanding the kernel of truth in Farragut's pithy saying that iron in the men is more important than iron in the ships, this battle only verified the lesson of the *Monitor-Merrimac* action that the ship of wood as a man-of-war was doomed. At New Orleans Farragut's squadron had succeeded largely because the land guns were old-fashioned and the ironclad *Louisiana* had not been completed. These conditions were reversed at Mobile Bay. Farragut's quick and resolute action won at New Orleans, as his accurate judgment, demonstrated in his insistence on ironclads, was decisive at Mobile. The sea power of the industrial North manifested itself in nothing so strikingly as in its rapid and revolutionary metamorphosis from wood to iron and from sail to steam.

According to Farragut's plan, the monitors, with the *Tecumseh* ahead, led the way very slowly by Fort Morgan. As they did so, Admiral Buchanan, with his gunboats and the *Tennessee*, emerged from behind Fort Morgan and steamed slowly from east to west, crossing the path of the on-coming Union ships at right angles. He moved his ram slightly to the west of the red buoy that evidently marked the eastern end of the line of torpedoes. As he did so, Captain Craven of the *Tecumseh*—not heeding Farragut's warning to pass east of the red buoy, but rather carrying out the spirit of Farragut's order to destroy the ram after entering the bay—headed straight for the *Tennessee*. A moment later there was a muffled explosion. The *Tecumseh* careened violently for an instant and plunged head first to the bottom, carrying with her all but twenty-

one of her complement of more than a hundred. The only exit from the pilot-house of the monitor was down through the turret and out by way of a gun-port. Of the few sur-

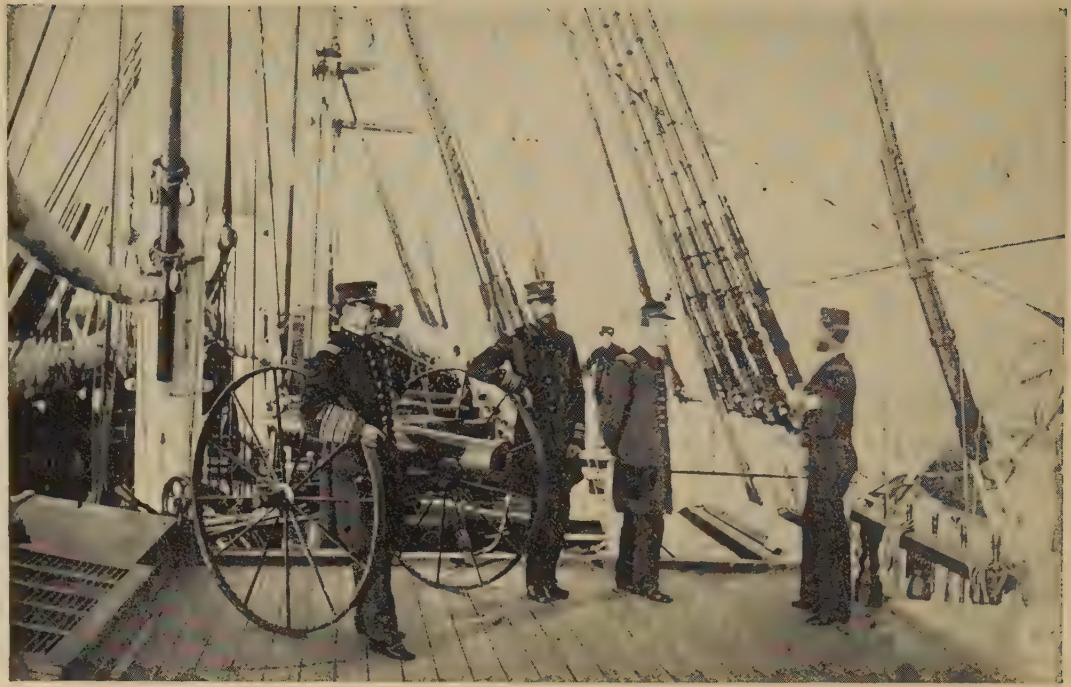


THE BATTLE OF MOBILE BAY

Adapted from the *Century Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*, IV. 384.

vivors, the pilot afterward told of the stoical courtesy of Captain Craven that cost the latter his life, expressed in his last words, "After you, pilot." The other three monitors kept on in their slow progress by the fort.

Shortly after this accident Captain Alden of the *Brooklyn,* fearing torpedoes, stopped his engines and by so doing nearly caused the ships astern of him to collide with one other. Farragut, who was standing in the port main rigging, where he had been lashed by the thoughtfulness of his fleet captain, Drayton, instantly saw the danger, ordered Captain Jouett of his consort, the *Metacomet,* to back his engines while the *Hartford's* kept going ahead. Thus Farragut turned sharp around the *Brooklyn* lying athwart the stream and in answer to his hail to her as he passed, inquiring what the trouble was, received the reply, "torpedoes ahead." It was then that he uttered the words since indissolubly associated with this battle: "Damn the torpedoes! Four bells, Drayton! Full speed, Jouett." At the same time, he gave the signal for close order. At once the column straightened out. By Farragut's cool decision in a great emergency the wooden ships, instead of piling up on one another, in a flood tide and right under the guns of Fort Morgan, passed on to the great bay beyond. The officers of the fleet, who in urgent solicitude for the old admiral's safety, had insisted that some other ship than his should lead the wooden column, were overruled by fate. The *Hartford* led the way over the mined field without accident but suffered from the terrific raking fire of the gunboats. She lost more killed and wounded during this period than at any time before or later. As Lieutenant Kinney, a signal-officer on the *Hartford,* writes, "The old expression of the 'scuppers running blood,' 'the slippery deck,' etc., give but the faintest idea of the spectacle on the *Hartford.*" As the *Hartford* steamed on, the *Tennessee* followed her as if to ram, but soon gave up and returned to run the gantlet of the rest of the Union ships. Owing to her awkwardness, however, and some defect in her primers, she inflicted little damage on them. On the other hand, even the heaviest-



Courtesy of Mrs. T. H. Eastman

FARRAGUT AND DRAYTON ON BOARD THE *HARTFORD*

Both are leaning on the wheels of the gun carriage, Farragut at the left of the picture, which was taken just after the Battle of Mobile Bay

Courtesy of U. S. Naval Institute

THE FIRST BATTLESHIP TO PASS THROUGH THE PANAMA CANAL

U. S. S. *Missouri* (Flagship Naval Academy Practice Squadron) passing through the Panama Canal on July 16, 1915. Taken in Culebra Cut looking north showing Cucaracha Slide. The Battleships *Ohio* and *Illinois* are following the *Missouri*

caliber Union guns had no effect on her. The *Hartford's* consort, the *Metacomet,* cut loose and captured one of the bothersome gunboats. The other two and the ram now took refuge under the guns of Fort Morgan. Farragut's fleet had successfully passed the forts and were at 8:30 A. M. coming to anchor.

Farragut at once made plans with Captain Drayton to destroy the *Tennessee* that night, under the guns of Morgan if need be, so that if the fort assisted in defending her, it would have to fire at friend and foe alike. But even before the last of the Union fleet had anchored, Farragut was amazed to notice that Buchanan was leaving his refuge and coming straight on for a fight with the whole fleet in broad daylight,—a brave but unnecessary risk, even if his ironclad was the most powerful vessel afloat. A similar attack under cover of darkness would have increased his chances of success greatly.

Farragut immediately ordered the handier and speedier wooden ships to ram the *Tennessee* and the slow monitors to bombard her. Thus began the second stage of the battle. The steam sloops made a number of brave attacks on the *Tennessee,* but only to break their beaks against the powerful sides of the ram. At this time, the two flag-ships made a dramatic dash at each other, bows on, but luckily for the *Hartford,* hit each other glancing blows. At the instant of impact the *Hartford* gave the ram at a distance of ten feet her whole broadside of seven 11-inch solid shot, which bounded off without any effect; while the ram, owing to defects in her primers, fired only one shell, which passed through the *Hartford's* berth-deck and killed five men. As the *Hartford* sheered off to circle around for another attempt, she was herself struck amidships by the *Lackawanna,* a blow that penetrated half-way through the *Hartford,* knocked two portholes into one, and opened a huge gap

extending nearly to the water-line. By this time the monitors had surrounded the ram. Of these the *Chickasaw,* ably handled by Commander George H. Perkins, took and kept a position never more than fifty yards from the *Tennessee's* stern. There the *Chickasaw* stuck and poured into the ram fifty-two 11-inch shot. She succeeded in jamming the ram's port shutters, starting her plates, and worst of all, cutting her steering-gear and thus rendering her helpless. Also as a result of one of Perkins's shots, a flying splinter of iron seriously injured Admiral Buchanan. Twenty minutes after this, Buchanan's successor in command, Johnston, surrendered the *Tennessee.*

On the same afternoon, August 5th, the *Chickasaw* shelled Fort Powell from its unprotected rear and forced its surrender that night. On August 7th, Fort Gaines capitulated after a similar shelling by the same monitor. On August 23d, after a bombardment by Granger's troops from the rear and by Farragut's fleet from the bay and the Gulf, Fort Morgan also surrendered. Henceforth Mobile as a port for blockade-runners was sealed. Farragut's service of fifty years in the navy received its fitting climax in this his last and most difficult battle. In December he reluctantly had to refuse a new command in the Atlantic and go north for a much needed rest.

Owing to the approach of the great military campaigns taking shape in Georgia and Virginia, the Union Government could not immediately spare the troops necessary for the investment of the city of Mobile. It was captured, however, the following spring by a combined military and naval force. In the attack the gunboats worked under great difficulties because the shallow approaches to the city were thickly sown with mines, or torpedoes, as they were called. An officer at one sweeping fished up one hundred of these mines. In the attacks six Union vessels

were sunk by torpedoes before the city surrendered in April, 1865.

Mobile marked the most successful use of the torpedo by the South, a weapon in which, with the ram, the Confederacy as the weaker belligerent in sea power placed as much reliance as Germany in the World War placed in her U-boats. The Confederate Government had established a special torpedo bureau in its Navy Department, which was very successful in perfecting various devices, all classed as torpedoes in that day. Among these devices were included not only the submarine mines explained above but also various types of infernal machines, such as irregular cast-iron shells painted black to resemble lumps of coal and intended for the coal-bunkers of Northern ships. Another form was the spar- or outrigger-torpedo, made fast, as its name implies, to a long spar projecting from the bow of a launch, the early type of torpedo-boat. This spar-torpedo was generally a metal cylinder containing the charge and an air-chamber to float it upright. Down the center of this cylinder ran a tube having a grape-shot at the top, held in place by a pin. When, under cover of darkness, the launch arrived alongside its intended victim, the torpedo was detached from the spar by a lanyard, and when all was ready the pin was withdrawn by a pull on another lanyard. Thereupon the grape-shot fell upon a fulminate cap at the bottom of the tube, exploded the charge, and generally blew up both the victim and the launch. It was with a spar-torpedo that William B. Cushing, a young lieutenant of the Union Navy, on the dark and rainy night of October 27, 1864, blew up the last Confederate ram, the *Albemarle,* lying at Plymouth on the Roanoke River in North Carolina,—one of the boldest ventures of the war. With a similar type of spar-torpedo the Confederates off Charleston Harbor in an early form of

submarine, appropriately called a David, blew up the Northern steam sloop of war *Housatonic*. But the Confederacy, despite its skill in perfecting the torpedo and the ram, was hampered by lack of materials and machinery and was doomed to failure before the overwhelming sea power of the industrial and commercial North.

After the capitulation of the city of Mobile Admiral H. K. Thatcher, Farragut's successor in the Gulf, received the surrender, on May 4, 1865, of the remaining Confederate river vessels in Alabama. On May 25th and June 2d, Sabine Pass and Galveston fell back under the control of the West Gulf Squadron. This squadron was merged in July with the East Gulf Squadron, and the combined force was maintained in the Gulf until May, 1867; that is, until the French emperor gave up his attempt to establish, in contravention of the Monroe Doctrine, an empire in Mexico.

In Farragut's Gulf service at New Orleans and Mobile Bay, therefore, the sea power of the United States frustrated the plans of Napoleon III to break the blockade and to place Maximilian on the throne of Mexico. Besides, the West Gulf Squadron had broken up an extensive illicit trade in cotton in exchange for munitions of war for the Confederacy, through Mexican ports on the Rio Grande. But the more immediate effects of Farragut's Mobile Bay victory for sea power were also important and far-reaching. Mobile was connected with the interior by rivers and railroads, which helped greatly to maintain the communications of the Confederate armies in the gigantic military campaigns of the last year of the war. Generals Grant and Sherman were bringing to a climax the great enveloping movement, a "bold offensive on concentric lines," by which they were to crush between them—and so end the war—the armies of Lee and Hood, the latter of whom had succeeded Johnston on July 18, 1864. To cut

off supplies from Mobile, Sherman had on several occasions tried in vain to destroy the Mobile and Ohio and the Jackson and Selma railroads. Of Napoleon I it was once said that he made his troops win his battles with their legs, —that is, by forced marches enveloping or flanking his enemies. Such work requires shoe leather. During the Georgia and Tennessee campaign whole regiments of Hood's army could not move because of the lack of shoes, which came from Europe if at all,—merely one item that illustrates the continually increasing pressure of the Union blockade. The sealing of Mobile Bay by Farragut's fleet shut off the Southern blockade-runners from this their most important base on the Gulf. By cutting off the supplies of the Confederate armies, Farragut's victory helped Sherman in the capture of Atlanta less than a month later,—an achievement which greatly heartened the people of the North, wearied by the long deadlock in Virginia. Mobile Bay enabled the Federal Administration to bridge the dangerous period in national morale before, by the fall of Atlanta, the tide set strongly in favor of the Union. President Lincoln publicly thanked Farragut and Sherman and set apart Sunday, September 3d, as a day for "devout acknowledgment to the Supreme Being" for the double victory. And lastly, in the November presidential election the opposition party put up as their candidate General McClellan, who had been nominated at Chicago on a platform declaring that the war was a failure. On that memorable election day of 1864, by the overwhelming electoral vote of 212 to 21, the people decided, "In spite of burdensome taxation, weariness of war, and mourning in every household, . . . to finish the work they had begun."[1] To adapt the words of Seward in a campaign speech, Sherman and Farragut had knocked the bottom out of the

[1] Rhodes, *History of the United States*, IV. 539.

Chicago platform. Without the sea power of the Union exerted against Napoleon and the Gulf ports, the South might have continued the struggle indefinitely, worn out the North, and made a Union one and inseparable an impossibility forever.

CHAPTER XX

DAVID GLASGOW FARRAGUT

FOR his six hours of remarkable work at New Orleans and Mobile Bay, Farragut had been preparing himself for fifty years. If genius is, as Carlyle asserts, "the transcendent capacity of taking trouble," Farragut was, in this sense at least, a genius. But nature and personal effort combined to fit him for his life's work; to an eminent degree his success was due to a great natural aptitude for war, greatly improved by profound study and observation in his profession. The happy union in him at the climax of his career of the dash and vigor of youth with the wisdom and judgment of age marks him as unusual. While Rodney was sixty-four at the time of his battle of the Saints, Jervis sixty-three at his battle of Saint Vincent, and Howe seventy at his "Glorious First of June," such cases for great captains were, as Mahan points out, the exception. For example, Nelson, Napoleon, Wellington, Grant, and Sherman were all approximately forty-five at the peaks of their military careers. Rodney, Jervis, and Howe, however, distinguished themselves in old age in a form of naval warfare which was essentially the same as that of their younger days. Not the least remarkable thing about Farragut is the fact that he, trained for half a century in the old navy, could at the age of sixty adapt himself to the new; for his professional service, extending from 1812 to the Civil War, spans the whole transition period in sea power from sail to steam and from wood to iron.

David Glasgow Farragut was born at Campbell's Station, Tennessee, July 5, 1801, the year of Nelson's battle of Copenhagen. In 1809 his father, Sailing-Master Farragut, a native of Minorca, had command of the naval station at New Orelans and during this duty took care of Sailing-Master David Porter, who spent his last days at Farragut's house. In gratitude for this kindness to his father, the younger David Porter, of *Essex* fame, offered to train Farragut's son, David Glasgow, for a naval officer's career. On the long cruise of the *Essex* under Porter in the Pacific during the War of 1812, young Farragut showed a marked liking for the sea, and at the early age of twelve, "probably with an old seaman as nurse," had unusual responsibility thrust upon him in taking charge of the prize *Barclay* and bringing her safely to port. He later accompanied Porter—whom he always spoke of as his "kind friend and patron," and for whom he retained through life a warm affection—on the latter's cruise against the West Indian pirates. During the long years of peace before the Civil War Farragut made many cruises to the West Indies, Mexico, and South America and to the Mediterranean. During these cruises and in the course of his duties he was often thrown into intimate contact with great historic characters of his time, such as Santa Anna and Rosas, dictators of Mexico and Argentina, Garibaldi, the Italian patriot, Lafayette,—whom after his memorable visit to the United States Lieutenant Farragut carried back in the *Brandywine* to France,—Dom Pedro I and II, Emperors of Brazil, Ferdinand IV, King of Naples and friend of Nelson, Metternich, the crafty diplomat of the Congress of Vienna, and a host of others, of whom Farragut has left us intimate glimpses in his Journal.

In 1855 Farragut attained the rank of captain, the highest grade of that period, and shortly after received com-

mand of the steam sloop of war *Brooklyn,* sister ship of the *Hartford,* the type in which he was later to win his great victories. In his intermittent shore duties he made his home at Norfolk, which was his legal residence for forty years until the outbreak of the Civil War, and where he was married. Born, bred, and married in Dixie, Farragut once remarked, "God forbid that I should ever have to raise my hand against the South." Torn between two loves,—his home and the flag he had served for half a century,—he, with that instant decision characteristic of him, left Norfolk for New York on the afternoon of the day that Virginia passed the Ordinance of Secession, April 18, 1861.

Until his great responsibilities in the Civil War had begun to wear him out, Farragut's health, physical vigor, and muscular strength were remarkable. Not above medium height, and not what one might call handsome, he was powerfully built and of graceful and alert military carriage. He was an adept in all physical exercises and he often joined his crew in their games of skill. He once won a prize in a foot-race with a brother officer. The story of his annual handspring on his birthday to prove the vigor of youth is well known. He frequently sent for one of the crew for a bout with the single-sticks. This gave him good practice for skill with the sword, which he always wore ashore, not as an ornament but for self-defense in returning to the ship at night in the back streets of Mediterranean or South American ports. "Any one wearing a sword," he used to remark, "ought to be ashamed not to be proficient in its use." His physical ability and alertness stood him in good stead in his work on the Gulf and on the Mississippi. "A general is not too old," Wellington once remarked, "when he can visit outposts in person and on horseback." Farragut at New Orleans and Mobile made minute first-hand inspections, clambering up the rigging and over the sides

with the nimbleness of a man one third his age. Since Mobile Bay the dispute has continued as to whether he was lashed to the port main rigging or the port mizzen. As a matter of fact he had been in both places, and an instant after the *Hartford's* collision with the *Lackawanna,* he was hanging far out over the side to take careful note of the injury, while his officers and crew were shouting, "Save the admiral," "Get the admiral out of the ship." In allusion to this incident—which caught the popular fancy—Joseph H. Choate, the orator at the unveiling of St. Gaudens's statue of Farragut in Madison Square, New York, May 25, 1881, said that Van Tromp had hoisted a broom to the masthead, Nelson hoisted his famous signal, "England expects every man to do his duty," and Farragut hoisted himself "as the living signal of duty done."

Nature had endowed Farragut no more in his bodily vigor than in his alert and vigorous intellect. As he had been sent to sea at the age of nine, his early education had been neglected. On a later cruise in the Mediterranean, a naval chaplain and United States Consul at Tunis, Mr. Charles Folsom, seeing Midshipman Farragut's keen desire to make up the defects in his training and also to improve his health, gained special permission from Commodore Chauncey to tutor the young man and take him on extended sight-seeing trips to Marseilles, the ruins of ancient Carthage, and the wild interior of northern Africa. After the Civil War, Farragut, now a hero in two hemispheres, sent his old tutor in grateful remembrance a token of their long friendship, to which Mr. Folsom, replying in a letter addressed to "My dear Boy," said: "I was ever on my guard, my dear Farragut, against flattering you when young, so easy was it for admiration and affection to slide into extravagant praise. Now indeed I may join my enthusiastic countrymen in their applause of all you have

accomplished in your profession." In his schooling under Mr. Folsom, Farragut also picked up a wide knowledge of languages. Years later, on another Mediterranean cruise, an old Arab woman arrived alongside the ship in a bumboat. After vainly trying to understand her an officer said: "Send for Farragut. He speaks the language of the devil." To the amazement of the bystanders Farragut carried on an easy conversation with the old woman.

Farragut also showed his mental alertness in his love of an argument—in which he always exhibited an open mind toward the other man's point of view—and in his love of books. He was throughout life a great reader, especially of the lives and achievements of the masters of his profession. In the period of naval stagnation in the long years of peace after 1815, when his brother officers—as is often the case—concentrated their interest on the individual ship and on the matériel of the service, Farragut in his reading showed his greatest interest in fleets and in personnel. In a letter written from Mobile Bay in October, 1864, to his son Loyall,—who later gave the world a very interesting biography of his father,—he gives this advice about studies and men:

> I confess I don't know much about analytical geometry, and I might not have seen the use of steam, telegraphy, and railroads, when I was as young as you are; but I do now fully comprehend the difficulties of keeping them all in order for working. So go along with your age, my boy, and remember also that one of the requisite studies for an officer is *man*. Where your analytical geometry will serve you once, a knowledge of men will serve you daily. As a commander, to get the right men in the right place is one of the questions of success or defeat.

Farragut's alertness in his professional studies and his keen observation in regard to matériel and personnel are brought out even by a cursory reading of his

voluminous reports to the Navy Department. During the bombardment by the French fleet of San Juan de Ulloa, he not only made careful notes of the effects of the horizontal fire of shells, the new types and arrangement of guns and decks of the French ships, the French Navy's equipment of a frigate as a hospital ship and the French method of transferring the wounded with least discomfort, but he also scrutinized the defenses of Vera Cruz, as he always did those of all ports he visited. "Who knows but that my services may be needed here some day," was his explanation of his scrutiny on such occasions. In this connection Mahan gives an illuminating remark of Jervis, who after his great victory became Earl St. Vincent, and who in seeking information about the defenses of Brest said to his secretary, "Had Captain Jervis surveyed Brest in 1774, in 1800 Lord St. Vincent would not have been in want of this information."

Farragut's keen interest in his profession, his deep insight into naval warfare, especially its human factors, is perhaps best understood in his numerous pithy and homely expressions that have come down as the heritage of the naval service. It is sometimes said of him that he failed to appreciate new inventions like the ironclad, the rifle, and the torpedo, reluctantly adopting the last named with the exclamation, "I have always deemed it unworthy of a chivalrous nation." In substantiation of this view his remark, "Give me the iron in the men and I care not so much about the iron in the enemy's ships," is cited. But this was simply his way of saying that morale, the human side, the man, is more important than armor. His request to be sent in 1854 to the Crimea to observe at first hand the application of steam and armor to naval warfare shows that he fully appreciated the new inventions of his time. Another Farragut epigram, "The best defense

against the enemy's fire is a well-directed fire from your own guns," demonstrates a fundamental point of his creed that men, not their arms or armor, are the essential factors of success. The same principle Farragut on another occasion stated thus: "The more you hurt the enemy the less he will hurt you." These quotations are simply his homely way of expressing what in more technical language would be "the best defense is a vigorous offense." So other Farragut epigrams throw light on his knowledge of naval warfare. "Once get behind a soldier's back and he is gone," sums up his whole system of strategy and tactics at New Orleans, Port Hudson, and Mobile Bay. For the attack on the last-mentioned place he requested an army, "to shut the back door." But above and beyond all his insight into naval war was his insight into human nature. Once on a return trip from the Mediterranean in a merchantman, Farragut, accompanied by a few invalided sailors, had an experience that called forth one of his numerous sayings treasured by the naval service. The merchantman's skipper and her crew, at sight of what they took for a pirate, were panic-stricken and prepared to abandon the vessel in the cutter. Farragut, with a few orders to the invalided tars, manned the only gun and prepared for resistance to the supposed pirate, which turned out to be a harmless fellow merchant ship passing a friendly hail. In connection with this incident he gave expression to the keynote of his later great success, "Men trained to arms will always do their duty, if ably led."

A phase of his mental grasp of the strategy and tactics of his profession was his careful preparation for every contingency in a battle. Before passing the forts of New Orleans, for example, he had equipped his fleet to meet fire-rafts by means of drills with water-buckets, grapples, and one hundred and fifty life-boats. This one precaution

probably saved the day in the crisis when the Confederate fire-raft set the *Hartford* in flames. And in preparation for entering Mobile Bay, with his fleet captain, Drayton, he studied for hours the possibilities of the action by means of little wooden models of ships, and later he ordered his squadron under way several times to practise fleet manœuvers and to drill his captains in keeping close formation and in changing course. In his planning for the contingencies of battle and in his intellectual grasp of a situation Farragut was much like Nelson.

But still more than Farragut's physical and intellectual superiority, the sanity and greatness of his character make him an officer without peer in American sea power. His peculiar aptitude for war was due more to his moral and spiritual qualities than to his intellectual. Among the elements of his character are a great heart, swayed by emotion and humor; an unusual loyalty to ideals of honor, service, country, and religion; a strong sense of responsibility; and, last and most important, an instantaneous judgment in a crisis and a fixity of purpose that prevailed against all odds.

Taking up these elements in Farragut's character, let us consider first his great heart full of warm human feeling, and jovial humor. He himself seemed to bear a charmed life despite his exposed positions and came through his three terrible ordeals of fire at New Orleans, Port Hudson, and Mobile without a scratch, though the *Hartford* in the battles was struck two hundred and forty times and her decks were strewn with dying and wounded men. On Farragut's descent from the rigging at Mobile Bay, as he saw the brave men who had fallen being laid out on deck, an old quartermaster said, "It was the only time I ever saw the old gentleman cry, but the tears came in his eyes like a little child." Farragut's devotion to his men was

like Nelson's, warm and reciprocated. Officers and men looked upon both with a feeling little short of reverence. Early in his career Farragut determined never to have what was called in the old navies a "crack ship," because such a ship was the result of endless tyranny over the crew and officers. Another example of his kind heart and consideration for others is brought out by the following remark of his fleet captain, Drayton: "I did not believe any man could be great if he did not know how to say 'no,' but I see he can; for certainly here is a great man, and he is too kind-hearted to say 'no' in some cases where it should be said." Young officers were impressed by Farragut's kindness, and a midshipman wrote of him, "He had a winning smile and a most charming manner and was jovial and talkative." With this joviality he had a keen sense of humor. Once he remarked to a navigator, whom he had caught in a mistake in his reckoning, "Never mind, sir, all men are liable to make mistakes, and—perhaps a few women." "Don't flinch from that fire," Farragut shouted to his crew fighting the flames on the *Hartford;* "there 's a hotter fire than that for those who don't do their duty."

Besides this kindly and humorous good nature of Farragut,—a trait that made men follow wherever he led,—another phase of his character was his stainless honor and his loyalty to duty and country. A request that he allow his name to be used as a director of a company, with an intimation that $100,000.00 of its stock would be placed to his credit, he refused on the ground that he did not understand the business and could not therefore give adequate service in return. He believed that loyalty to the navy and to the country was so important that the officer should overlook even injustice, and political intrigue; "for," he said, "an unwise decision will recoil on the officials that be, sooner or later," and an open and aboveboard attitude "in

the long run will always give one the advantage over an intriguing adversary." His devotion to country, and incidentally his piety, pervade his letters to his family; for example, this paragraph from a letter to his son of April 24, 1864:

> This night two years ago was the anxious night of my life, when I felt as if the fate of my country and my own life and reputation, were all on the wheel of fortune to be turned by the finger of the All-Wise; when *Dixi,* "I said it." It was only left to do or die. God was my leader, and we passed through a fiery furnace where none but He could have carried us. It is the second anniversary of the passage of Forts Jackson and St. Philip, and being Sunday, it seemed a fit occasion for going to church and offering up our prayers and thanks to the Dispenser of all things for His blessings and mercies during the last two years.

In addition to his warm heart and his high principles of honor and of duty to country,—phases of character that made him an inspiring leader of men,—Farragut had to an unusual degree a keen sense of responsibility, a willingness on occasion to take a great risk and bear the result of it, whatever the result might be. Over-cautiousness has blighted the career of many a promising officer. Jervis once remarked that the true test of a man's courage is his willingness to shoulder responsibility. Farragut declared, probably with reference to the unusual burdens thrust upon his own young shoulders in 1812 to 1814, "Persons who come into authority late in life shrink from responsibility." In his passing of the forts at New Orleans against the advice of his able lieutenant, Porter, and with departmental orders so worded that in case of failure the entire blame would fall on him, he took the whole burden of success or failure on himself. In his overpowering sense of responsibility Farragut showed boldness without rashness and vigorous rapidity of action without recklessness. Of

his fleet captain he once remarked: "Drayton does not know fear, and would fight the devil himself, but he believes in acting as if the enemy can never be caught unprepared; whereas I believe in judging him by ourselves, and my motto in action is [quoting Danton's words] *'L'audace, et encore de l'audace, et toujours de l'audace.'* " How heavily the burden of Farragut's great responsibility weighed on him is manifest in the following letter to his wife, written the day before his last great fight:

Flag-ship *Hartford*,
Off Mobile, August 4, 1864.

My dearest Wife:

I write and leave this letter for you. I am going into Mobile Bay in the morning, if God is my leader, as I hope He is, and in Him I place my trust. If He thinks it is the proper place for me to die, I am ready to submit to His will, in that as in all other things. My great mortification is, that my vessels, the ironclads, were not ready to have gone in yesterday. The army landed last night, and are in full view of us this morning, and the *Tecumseh* has not yet arrived from Pensacola.

God bless and preserve you, my darling, and my dear boy, if anything should happen to me, and may His blessings also rest upon your dear mother, and all your sisters and their dear children.

Your devoted and affectionate husband, who never for one moment forgot his love, duty, and fidelity to you, his devoted and best of wives.

D. G. Farragut.

To Mrs. D. G. Farragut,
Hastings on the Hudson.

This brings us to the last point in Farragut's military character,—his instant and accurate judgment in a crisis calling for instant and vigorous action, and his powerful will that forced victory in the face of defeat. At the battle of Copenhagen, which Nelson himself regarded as his masterpiece, Nelson with a dozen ships of the line and

frigates silenced the guns of eighteen anchored hulks supported by powerful shore batteries. At the crisis of the battle, when several of his ships had gone aground, he was signaled to retire by his commanding officer, who probably pitied what he regarded as the foolhardiness of his subordinate. Then it was that Nelson, putting the glass to his blind eye, said he did not see the signal, continued the battle, and won the most critical fight of his career. Farragut's battle of Mobile Bay was strikingly like Nelson's at Copenhagen, except for Nelson's cynical insubordination in the presence of younger officers, an act of which Farragut could not have been guilty whatever the gain.[1] At the critical moment at Mobile Bay, when the *Brooklyn's* hesitation threatened confusion and disaster to the fleet, it was Farragut's instant judgment, quick action, and tenacity of purpose that won. Hence Mahan justly observes: "In the lofty courage and stern determination which plucked victory out of the very jaws of defeat, the battle of Mobile Bay was to the career of Farragut what the battle of Copenhagen was to that of Nelson." Only in a less degree but of the same quality was Farragut's prompt action and resolute determination displayed at those other two crises when the *Hartford* was in imminent danger of destruction by fire at New Orleans or by grounding under the batteries of Port Hudson. Many an officer of unusual intellectual power has analyzed a situation and yet has failed in the execution. Such a man has in an emergency hesitated for a moment between two courses and lost. Mahan, in his "Life of Farragut," says:

> It is the strength of purpose, in the power of rapid decision, of instant action, and if need be, of strenuous endurance through

[1] That Farragut's rule of obedience was very different from Nelson's is evident from his letters and Journal, e. g., Loyall Farragut, *Life of Admiral Farragut*, p. 107.

a period of danger or of responsibility, when the terrifying alternatives of war are vibrating in the balance, that the power of a great captain mainly lies.[1]

The main incidents in Farragut's life after the Civil War may be briefly summarized. As a reward for his distinguished service to his country, he was, in December, 1864, made a vice-admiral, and on July 25, 1866, Congress created the grade of admiral, which was also immediately given to him, the first officer to hold this highest honor in the American Navy. On a visit to New York the city honored him and was in turn honored by the graceful tender and acceptance of a gift of fifty thousand dollars wherewith the admiral might carry out the citizens' invitation to make his home among them. In 1867 Admiral Farragut, accompanied by Mrs. Farragut, sailed for Europe in the steam frigate *Franklin,* flying his broad pennant as commander of the European Squadron. This cruise was like a triumphal progress. He was entertained by the most distinguished members of his own profession everywhere, by Napoleon III and Queen Victoria, and by the citizens of Cuidadela in Minorca, his father's birthplace. After his return in 1868 some prominent Democrats urged Farragut to allow his name to be placed before the convention as a nominee for the Presidency, an honor which he declined. He later visited the Mare Island Navy Yard, whose first commandant he had been thirty years before. His health now began to fail. During a visit to the commandant of the navy-yard at Portsmouth, New Hampshire, on August 14, 1870, Admiral Farragut died. After a public funeral in New York, attended by President Grant and his cabinet, he was buried at Woodlawn, where he rests to-day.

Mahan compares and contrasts Farragut with Nelson,

[1] Mahan, *Admiral Farragut,* p. 317.

the two whom he regards as the geniuses of American and British sea power. In the esteem of his officers and men; in dash, boldness, and rapidity of execution; in clear perception of the decisive features of a campaign, Farragut was like Nelson. But the American admiral had not the opportunities of the Briton for great fleet duels. Farragut's achievements lay rather in combats of fleets against forts. Farragut was like Nelson a genius, but without the eccentricities of genius. In his humanness; in his high ideals of honor; in his deep sense of responsibility to duty and to country; in his instant decision and vigor in execution, he is without peer in his profession. If we qualify the much-abused word "genius" to mean an infinite capacity for hard work and a great sane moral balance Farragut was and remains the genius of American sea power.

CHAPTER XXI

MAHAN REVOLUTIONIZES THE WORLD'S CONCEPTION OF SEA POWER

MAHAN'S professional career at the age of twenty began where Farragut's at sixty ended,—in the great transition period of the Civil War. Recently graduated from the Naval Academy, he served through the war that saw the momentous change to steam and armor. Of this transition he makes the remark in his autobiographic "From Sail to Steam": "It has been aptly said that a naval captain who fought in the Invincible Armada would have been more at home in the typical warship of 1840, than the average captain of 1840 would have been in the advanced types of the American Civil War." But despite the great lessons of the war the American spirit of progress in naval affairs, which had so recently sent to the junk pile the wooden fleets of the world, went to sleep immediately after 1865. During the long period of stagnation that followed, Mahan, like Farragut after 1812, served in most discouraging circumstances. American traditions of sea power clung to the idea that navies could be improvised, that the naval organization hardly needed to be maintained in times of peace, and that all the necessary elements, ships and men, could be quickly provided from the merchant marine. Especially was there an idea that if attacked the United States could send out privateers to harass the enemy's commerce and even enrich the country with the easy spoils thus secured. No

idea of a fleet of ships of various sizes and functions crossed the American mind. But Mahan's teachings changed all this. If Farragut was the doer, Mahan was the thinker of the American Navy. Mahan's ideas created a new American Navy and inaugurated a new world epoch for sea power.

Yet Mahan was no impractical theorist. His thinking was of far more value to his own country and the world than the deeds of many of his brother officers who were inclined to regard him as a failure in his profession. He realized that the great achievements in history had been based on sound workable hypotheses. He was not like the professor who at a meeting of scientists gave this toast, "Here 's to pure theory and damned be he who applies it to anything." He believed always in harnessing together sound theory and practice to get the best results out of the team. Of Mahan's practical ability in his profession, a brother officer who knew him well says:

> That he [Mahan] distinguished himself preeminently on shipboard cannot be claimed. Luck or circumstances denied him the opportunity of doing things heroic and his modesty those purely spectacular. As a subordinate or as captain of a single ship, what he did was done well. No further proof of his qualities in this respect is needed than the fact that, at the outbreak of the Civil War, when finishing his midshipman's cruise, he was asked by a shipmate, an officer who expected a command, to go with him "as first lieutenant." To his colleagues of the old navy this invitation was the highest form of professional approval. The fates decreed that the wider field should not be his wherein, as commander-in-chief of a fleet in war time, he could have exhibited the mastery he surely possessed of that art with which his name will forever be indissolubly linked.[1]

It will help the reader better to understand the work of Mahan as the historian of sea power if he will first take

[1] Fiske, *U. S. Naval Institute*, January–February, 1915, p. 2.

a glance at the officer's career. Alfred Thayer Mahan was of distinctly intellectual parentage. His father was a professor of civil engineering at West Point, where the son was born on September 27, 1840. Entering the Naval Academy as a midshipman only eleven years after its founding in 1845 by George Bancroft, the distinguished historian, then Secretary of the Navy, Mahan received the intellectual broadening of the new system of naval education, a fact that partly explains his ability to break away from the centuries-old traditions of the period of sail and wood. It is interesting to note that he got his appointment to the academy through Jefferson Davis, then President Pierce's Secretary of War, and that he was a contemporary of Schley, Sampson, and Dewey, the real pioneers in the new American sea power that was to spring up in the last two decades of the century. As a lieutenant, Mahan, mostly on blockade duty, saw much service in the Civil War, in the latter part of which he was on Rear-Admiral Dahlgren's staff. Of the next twenty years, while the American Navy, after its great effort in 1861–65, lay in deep slumber, Mahan regarded the years 1870 and 1885 as turning-points in his own career. In 1870 he was on a European cruise just before the upheaval which through military, not sea, power, called into being the German Empire and the Kingdom of Italy,—a period in which he took a most lively interest. From this time dated what he calls his "predisposition to recognize the momentous bearing of maritime force upon the course of history, which insured me a hearing when the fulness of my time was come."

To the year 1885, Mahan ascribes the beginning of the period when the United States Navy slowly awoke from its lethargy, for it was at this time that Congress began a new building-program, still on traditional lines,—cruisers, not battle-ships,—but with cruisers like the *Chicago*

whose fourteen-knot contract speed marked at least the early dawn of a new day. The same period saw the beginning of the Naval War College at Newport, whose founder, Stephen B. Luce, Mahan was to succeed as president and with whose destiny he was henceforth closely associated. It was in connection with the beginnings of the War College, in 1885, that Mahan, then on a cruise in the *Wachusett* on the west coast of South America, received recognition of his profound knowledge of naval history and strategy in an invitation from Luce to lecture to the first classes at the college,—an event that led him to his life-work and to an international fame that made him a foremost figure in his profession. In 1892 Mahan was a member of a commission that chose the site for the Bremerton Navy Yard in Puget Sound. In 1894, while on a cruise in Europe, Mahan was honored by degrees from Oxford and Cambridge,—a recognition that was hastily imitated by like distinctions from American universities. After forty years' service he retired from active duty to devote himself entirely to his favorite theme,—the history of sea power. He was recalled in 1898 to serve as a member of the Naval War Board at Washington to outline the naval strategy in the conflict between the United States and Spain. The next year as a member of the first Hague Peace Conference, Mahan rendered important service in numerous questions relating to arbitration and to private property at sea, and in his championship of the Monroe Doctrine. After the interruption of the Spanish War and the Hague Conference, Mahan completed his sea-power studies. In 1906 he was made a rear-admiral in tardy recognition of his great service to his profession and his country. From this time to his death on December 1, 1914, Admiral Mahan continued to make contributions to the world's literature on questions of naval administration,

strategy, and armaments, and on national and international policies related to sea power.

In his lectures at the War College, Mahan by the touch of genius was to reconstruct from the fossilized remains of naval history a new and vital philosophy of sea power. For his purposes he found plenty of the earlier French and British narratives, especially Bonfils's "History of the French Navy" and Campbell's "Lives of the Admirals," on which he could base his reconstruction. But the practical application of naval history to future war operations met with grave doubt and much ridicule both from brother officers and from outsiders. Mahan relates an amusing experience with a fat, florid-faced, and condescending representative of one of the great New York dailies, who came to have a look at the college. As his eye caught a battle plan of Trafalgar on the wall, he laid the future historian of sea power flat with his own deep intuitive knowledge of naval history. Mahan thus summarizes this incident with the reporter. " 'Ah,' he said, with superb up-to-date pity, 'you are still talking about Trafalgar'; and I could see that Trafalgar and I were henceforth on the top shelf of fossils in the collections of his memory."

Among Mahan's early audiences at the War College, those who came to scoff remained to pray; it was this favorable reception of his lectures that led to their publication in book form. For his first series of lectures he acknowledges his indebtedness to Martin's "History of France," a work that opened his eyes to the commercial and maritime policy of Colbert, the able minister of Louis XIV. The Grand Monarch finally rejected Colbert's advice to strengthen his sea power and centered his efforts on armies, only to end in being broken—as other tyrants before and after him—by sea power. This new insight into the connection between commercial and naval power—between "civil and

military sea power''—gave Mahan the theme and set the limits for his first and greatest work ''The Influence of Sea Power Upon History,'' which covers the momentous contests for control of the seas between England, Holland, and France to the year 1783. From his wide and varied reading Mahan had indeed previously caught glimpses of the decisive importance of sea power. For instance, while perusing a copy of Mommsen's ''History of Rome'' in the library of the English Club at Lima, Peru, in 1885, he tells us, ''It suddenly struck me . . . how different things might have been could Hannibal have invaded Italy by sea, as the Romans often had Africa, instead of by the long land route.'' The publication in 1890 of ''The Influence of Sea Power Upon History'' brought Mahan instant recognition throughout the world.

In his next volumes, ''The Influence of Sea Power Upon the French Revolution and Empire,'' Mahan covered the period from where his first book ended, 1783, to the fall of Napoleon in 1815. The new work, which like the former was based on lectures previously delivered at the War College, took for its theme the exhaustive force of sea power in bringing the military dictator of the Continent to his knees. In it Mahan proves that the revenues of England's vast commerce sustained her allies in one coalition after another until Bonaparte finally fell. He shows that after the battle of Trafalgar—fought ten years before Waterloo —Napoleon, finding that his navies could not wrest sea control from England, tried by his Continental Blockade to exclude British goods from Europe; by so doing Napoleon destroyed not Great Britain but himself. In his treatment Mahan works up to his great conclusion that Napoleon dug his grave not in Spain but in his disastrous Russian campaign,—a direct result of the emperor's attempts by means

of his Continental System to exclude British goods from the Baltic. This second sea-power book after various interruptions—for example, one bureau chief refused to grant Mahan permission to complete the manuscript on the ground that it was not a naval officer's business to write books—was finally given to the world in 1892.

Despite the hard work he put on his first books on sea power, Mahan tells us they were a labor of love; this was not so with his next in the series,—"Sea Power in Its Relations to the War of 1812," which, covering the last three years of the Napoleonic struggle, was an outgrowth of his previous work. This was a laborious effort, lacking in vital interest to one whose studies centered around the great fleet actions of a Nelson. But Mahan regarded his "War of 1812" as his most thorough piece of historical research, based as it is largely on original documents in the archives of Washington, Ottawa, and London. He applies to his "War of 1812" the remark of a Chinese artist to a dissatisfied customer, "How can pretty face make, when pretty face no have got?"

But Mahan's professional biographies of Farragut and Nelson, whom he regarded as respectively the greatest American, and the greatest British seaman, were, like his earlier work, labors of love. For these he had "a warm admiration little short of affection." In fact, he says that he would no more write the biography of a man for whom he did not feel a warm admiration than he would maintain a friendship with one for whom he had no affection. In an effort to make real to himself the subject of his biography he tried to live with him "in as close familiarity as was consistent with the fact of his being dead." An ardent admirer of Boswell's "Life of Johnson," Mahan tried through the letters written by his subjects, and to them,

to establish as intimate relation with them as was possible in the circumstances. Thus by critically selecting and skilfully introducing an apt remark or act Mahan hoped to give to the reader "those minute touches by which an artist secures likeness and heightens effect." Nor did Mahan in his treatment pass over the shortcomings especially of Nelson. "I grieved while I condemned." In his two biographies Mahan tried to find the real officer and man. In them he gave the world a careful estimate of the military characters of Farragut and Nelson.

Mahan's series of books, especially his first, "The Influence of Sea Power Upon History," which was epochal in its effects, were tremendous in their stimulus to naval thought the world over. In Great Britain, a country whose every citizen had felt vaguely for centuries the importance of sea power on its insular position, the reception of his books was particularly enthusiastic. Mahan had given expression to Britain's vague consciousness that in past centuries she had in great crises been saved against conquest by her Drakes, Hawkes, and Nelsons. Of the favorable reception received by Mahan's sea-power series in England there are numerous evidences in articles contributed to British service journals, for example, the following from the pen of Colonel Maurice, which appeared in May, 1893, as a review of Mahan's "Influence of Sea Power Upon the French Revolution and Empire":

> Here, for the first time, is told in its true proportions the story of that great struggle which was waged by our forefathers against the forces of the French Revolution. One is tempted to feel ashamed that such a task should have been left to be undertaken by an American sailor. Yet it is well that it should have been so. The impartiality, the justice, the dignity, with which a bystander has been able to record that wonderful story would scarcely have been possible for an English subject. Even if an Englishman had had all the merits of the writer, he could hardly

have freed himself from national and party proclivities. Had he done so he would have been suspected of them.[1]

But while Mahan's work was more enthusiastically applauded in Great Britain,—even as an orator addressing a sympathetic and already half-convinced audience needs only to reiterate old slogans to set his hearers on fire,—his influence in other parts of the world where the power of armies was still regarded as the last argument of nations was revolutionary. His first two epochal books were quickly translated into French, German, Russian, and Japanese. The last-named, the "Britons of the East," whose island kingdom like Britain's depended on the sea, were most apt pupils of Mahan's teachings. They had, soon after Perry had called them out of their Oriental seclusion, sent their sons to British naval schools, where their future admirals like Togo learned to pay a reverence to Nelson little short of Britain's own worship of her hero. How thoroughly the Japanese absorbed Mahan's ideas became manifest in their battle of Tsu Shima in 1905, the Trafalgar of steam, where Admiral Togo's strategy and tactics, from his choice of bases to his fleet manœuvers, showed a unique application of the principles of the great teacher. "As far as known to myself," says Mahan, "more of my works have been done into Japanese than into any other tongue."

William II, who became Emperor of Germany two years before Mahan's epochal pronouncement on sea power was published, and whose empire had been won by great military power only a score of years before, became an immediate and enthusiastic convert to Mahan's ideas. To some Americans the emperor once flatteringly remarked that he always kept a copy of Poe under his pillow; and to another he made a similar remark about Mahan's first

[1] Maurice, *United Service Magazine, New Series,* VII. 792.

book,—an incident which sheds a new light on the old saying, "Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown." Hurd in the "Fortnightly Review" for August, 1906, tells us that the kaiser possessed a copy of Mahan's "Influence of Sea Power Upon History," and had annotated it himself. Moreover, he immediately ordered the book to be in every ship's library of his fleet. As he was always looking askance at British sea power, perhaps he already had some vague presentiment of the need of fleets for fulfilling his dreams of world conquest. For he had already created a navy department and was building the Kiel Canal, which would make his sea communications from the Baltic to the North Sea safe. He had, moreover, inveigled the British into swapping Heligoland for a province in Africa,—an exchange which a British statesman tried to justify by the remark that his countrymen had given a button for a whole suit of clothes. To this a German strategist, who must have read his Mahan pretty carefully, replied that the button would hold the whole German suit together. That it came pretty nearly doing so in the World War is a matter of recent history. It is fortunate for mankind that Great Britain in practice if not in conscious knowledge had anticipated Mahan's teaching by three hundred years, for the German emperor, finding himself behind in 1914 in the race for competitive naval armament, decided that Moltke's ideas were after all better than Mahan's. Land power in the Balkans would neutralize sea power in the Mediterranean. And in the event he proved once again the teachings of history, as illuminated by Mahan, that sea power has, in the words of George Washington, the casting vote.

In a word, then, Mahan's writings have greatly influenced the building of navies since the last decade of the nineteenth century both in his own and other countries. Though no imperialist himself, Mahan fostered uninten-

tionally the imperialistic tendencies that have been going on in the world during the last quarter of a century. He taught his own countrymen and the statesmen of the world to think in terms not of cruisers but of dreadnoughts, not of single ships but of fleets, not of commerce-destruction but of commerce conservation, not of fleets versus forts but of fleets versus fleets, not of coast defense but of control of the seas, and not of the defensive but of the offensive. Mahan in these ways revolutionized the world's conception of sea power.

CHAPTER XXII

SEA POWER IN THE PACIFIC

THE year 1898, when the Spanish-American War began and ended—a war in which, on May 9th, Admiral Mahan was recalled from his retirement to guide the strategy of his country on the Naval War Board —was the most important year for American sea power since the Civil War. This importance was due not only to naval operations in the Caribbean, the immediate seat of the war, but quite as much to events in the Pacific, where this period witnessed a vast readjustment in Asiatic affairs. At this critical time Germany, France, England, Russia, and Japan were threatening the dismemberment of China. As a result of the Chino-Japanese War of 1894, Japan had acquired a suzerainty over Korea. By the interference of Russia and Germany in the resulting peace negotiations on their hypocritical interest in the integrity of China, Japan lost Port Arthur, which she had won in the war. This pretended interest Russia soon after cynically threw to the four winds by her own acquisition of Port Arthur, which in 1898 she was fortifying as a winter terminus of the Trans-Siberian Railway and as a great naval base. Germany also found in the killing of some missionaries a pretense for seizing a port in China,—Kiao-chau in Shantung. And England in this same year added to her previous spheres of influence Wei-hai-wei.

While China was thus being dismembered, the United States by troubles at its very door, in Cuba, was drifting into war with Spain. As one important result of this war

the American Government found itself in unexpected possession of important islands in the Pacific, which forced it, almost against its will, to abandon its policy of isolation

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and to take a hand in Far-Eastern questions. This new American interest crystallized in John Hay's Open-Door policy for China,—a policy which like that other great American policy, the Monroe Doctrine, depends for its sanction in the last analysis on sea power.

The underlying causes of the Spanish-American War were misrule and insurrections in Cuba, covering intermittently half a century. As a concomitant of these revolutions, filibustering expeditions, like that of the *Virginius* in 1873, sent by American sympathizers in aid of the Cubans, often brought on diplomatic complications between Spain

and the United States. Like the Mexican revolutions of later date, these disturbed conditions continued to cause serious losses in property and lives to American residents. During the last revolt of the Cubans, 1895 to 1898, the battleship *Maine,* which had been sent to Havana to safeguard the lives of Americans, was on February 15, 1898, blown up in the harbor of Havana by some outside agency,—a fact brought out by the official investigation that followed. In the interval between the blowing up of the *Maine* and April 21, 1898, when war began, the American Government was preparing for the conflict.

Theodore Roosevelt, Assistant Secretary of the Navy, with his firm belief in preparedness for war and with his dynamic energy, had been getting the navy ready for the war which he saw approaching, and which he realized would be dependent for its decision on sea power. Of Roosevelt's energy, John D. Long, the Secretary of the Navy, wrote:

> He was heart and soul in his work. His typewriters had no rest. . . . He was especially stimulating to the younger officers who gathered about him and made his office as busy as a hive. He was especially helpful in the purchasing of ships and in every line where he could push on the work of preparation for war.

As Fox had discovered in Farragut the man for the New Orleans attack, Roosevelt saw in Commodore George Dewey the man for the important station in the Far East, where a serious situation, calling for a man of action and tact, might arise at any moment. Against departmental red-tape, bureaucracy, and political favoritism, Roosevelt put through the selection of Dewey as commander of the Asiatic Squadron.

George Dewey was born at Montpelier, Vermont, December 26, 1837. He entered the Naval Academy in 1854, the year that Perry opened Japan to the trade and civiliza-

tion of the world. It was Perry's flag-ship, the side-wheeler *Mississippi,* in which Dewey at the age of twenty-four received his baptism of fire as he piloted her by Forts Jackson and St. Philip on that memorable night in April, 1862. In her he saw service in the Mississippi campaign until under the batteries of Port Hudson she was set on fire and drifted to her watery grave in the great river whose name she bore. He served, also, as second officer, in the attack on Fort Fisher in the steam frigate *Colorado,* which had previously been under a martinet who had made her a most unhappy ship. Young Dewey by his just and firm attitude toward the men stamped out the spirit of insubordination, yet not without experiences such as Farragut, in his early youth, had had. After the Civil War Dewey's professional career was the uneventful succession of duties ashore and afloat of peace times,—duties so carefully and conscientiously performed that his record brought him to Roosevelt's notice. At the age of sixty, like Farragut, Commodore Dewey was to fight the great battle of his career,—a battle in some respects strikingly like that of New Orleans, where Dewey had learned under his great leader the art of attacking fleets protected by forts. Of his debt to Farragut Dewey says:

> Farragut has always been my ideal of the naval officer, urbane, decisive, indomitable. Whenever I have been in a difficult situation, or in the midst of such a confusion of details that the simple and right thing to do seemed hazy, I have often asked myself, "What would Farragut do?" In the course of the preparations for Manila Bay I often asked myself this question, and I confess that I was thinking of him the night that we entered the bay, and with the conviction that I was doing precisely what he would have done. Valuable as the training at Annapolis was, it was poor schooling beside that of serving under Farragut in time of war.[1]

This conscious imitation of Farragut is borne out in

[1] *Autobiography of George Dewey,* p. 50.

Commodore Dewey's careful study and preparation for his new duties. The interval before his departure for Japan, December 7, 1897, he employed in the study of international law and in the scrutiny of charts and descriptions of the Philippine Islands,—which were at that time so little visited by American merchantmen and naval vessels that the most recent report in the Bureau of Naval Intelligence was out of date by more than a score of years. Although few officials in Washington at the time of Dewey's departure believed war with Spain was a probability, Commodore Dewey thought the situation grave and foresaw that the objective in case of war was, not an attack on Spain, but rather the seizure of her colonies, especially Cuba and the Philippines. Before leaving he arranged for a supply of ammunition to be sent out in the *Concord* and the *Baltimore* from the navy yard at San Francisco, the nearest base, though seven thousand miles away. On January 3, 1898, in the harbor of Nagasaki, he hoisted his broad pennant on the *Olympia,* proceeded to Yokohama to pay his respects to the Emperor of Japan—a tactful and diplomatic move—and then started for Hongkong, where he received news of the destruction of the *Maine* and got his first instructions from the Navy Department, through the assistant secretary, "to keep full of coal" in the event of an offensive against the Spanish squadron in the Philippines.

Feeling greatly the need of a base, Dewey on his own initiative had to arrange for the purchase of coal and colliers and select an out-of-the-way port wherein to keep his supply-vessels in case of war and the resulting declarations of neutrality by the great powers, which would necessitate his withdrawal within twenty-four hours from Hongkong, a British possession. Meanwhile he kept in constant touch with the American consul at Manila, from whom he got much valuable information regarding the state of the

Spanish fleet under Admiral Montojo and of the defenses of Manila Bay. During this time he also overhauled his engines, removed the woodwork from his ships, gave them a coat of war-paint, and kept his crews up to the mark by constant drills. Despite the stream of rumors that reached Hongkong of mines and large rifles protecting the entrance to Manila, the morale of Dewey's officers and men was splendid. The British officers at Hongkong summed up their opinion of Dewey's men and their task in these words: "A fine set of fellows, but unhappily we shall never see them again."

These rumors, a subtle form of Spanish propaganda, Dewey did not give much credence to, but he continued his careful preparation on the assumption that he had a well-prepared enemy and a task not very different from Farragut's at New Orleans. On April 23d, Dewey received notice from the Governor of Hongkong to leave the port within forty-eight hours. The same day, in the nick of time, the *Baltimore* arrived with its badly needed second instalment of ammunition, which filled Dewey's squadron a little over half of its full capacity, and there was no more within seven thousand miles. Had he and Roosevelt not insisted on the despatch of the *Concord* and the *Baltimore* and had Dewey not by a personal visit to Mare Island hurried up the repairs and loading of the vessels, he would probably in the present emergency have been without these two important cruisers and their more important cargoes. On April 25th Dewey was informed by the Secretary of the Navy of the outbreak of hostilities and was ordered to capture or destroy the Spanish squadron in the Philippines. After leaving Hongkong on April 25th, Commodore Dewey spent two days at Mirs Bay, a Chinese port near Hongkong, to take on board his last supplies of coal and to await final intelligence from Washington, and especially to meet the

American consul on the latter's arrival from Manila, from whom he got reliable information that the Spaniards had some very powerful rifles in their shore batteries and some more rumors that the entrance had recently been mined.

On April 27th Dewey's squadron, consisting of the *Olympia,* flag-ship, the *Baltimore,* the *Boston,* the *Raleigh,* the *Concord,* the *Petrel,* and the *McCulloch,* left Mirs Bay for Manila, six hundred miles away. This city is located twenty-six miles from the high headlands which guard the entrance of Manila Bay. The entrance is divided into two channels by the islands of El Fraile, Corregidor, and Caballo. Beyond these the bay opens out to a width of twenty-five miles, with Cavité, the Spanish naval arsenal, on its right and Manila five miles beyond. During the trip across from China, Dewey gave his cruisers, which were all unarmored, some protection by layers of heavy chain cables along the most vulnerable parts. He also held frequent conferences with his captains, with whom he planned to slip into Manila Bay in column formation under cover of darkness, and once inside, on signal from the flag-ship, to engage the enemy's fleet.

Commodore Dewey sighted the Philippines on April 30th, and after a vain search at Subig Bay—where he had been informed by the American consul that Admiral Montojo intended to make his stand—Dewey that night with all lights out silently made his way into the enemy's lair. He had rightly diagnosed the Spanish morale (or, rather, lack of morale); he believed that the Spaniards' attitude would be passive and defensive, and that a quick, aggressive attack would demoralize them. He had discounted the yarns about submarine mines, for he reasoned that none but the most expert engineers could plant mines in the deep waters of Boca Grande, the channel he intended to take, and that in the second place the mines, even if planted,

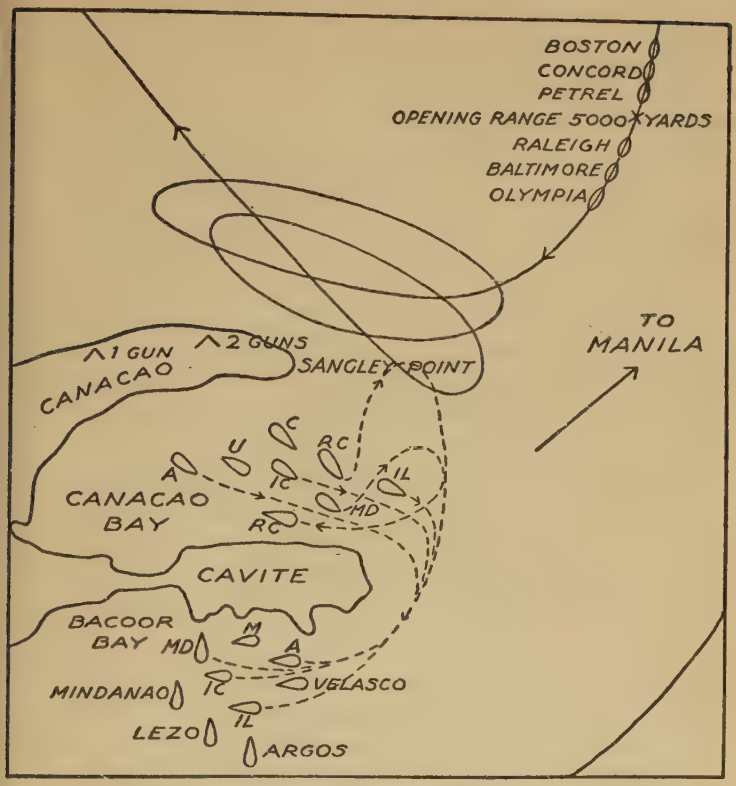
would rapidly deteriorate in the tropical salt water. At all events, mines or no mines, he had determined to enter the bay. As Dewey's squadron in the pitch-black darkness silently felt its way in, the alert lookouts could discover no scout or torpedo-boat on guard. The Americans got well beyond the first island before the Spaniards, who must have been informed of Dewey's departure from Mirs Bay, finally opened fire. Three shots from El Fraile went wide of their mark, were answered by a few shots from the squadron, and then all was still again. It was now midnight; Dewey's cruisers on approaching the bay itself slowed down to four knots in order not to reach Manila and the enemy's squadron before daybreak of this memorable first of May.

Thinking the enemy's squadron was under the Manila batteries, Dewey swung in a semicircle by the city and as he did so got his first glimpse in the early dawn of Montojo's fleet of seven units anchored abreast of the Sangley Point battery at the end of the peninsula of Cavité. The batteries at the city had been firing at the American squadron but without hitting anything, and now at 5:15 A. M., the Spanish fleet and Sangley Point battery opened on Dewey's approaching cruisers. The American commodore at 5:40 A. M., turning to the captain of the *Olympia,* quietly said, "You may fire when you are ready, Gridley."

The *Olympia's* salvo was the signal for the rest of the American squadron to open fire on Montojo's fleet. Dewey passed and repassed the enemy, all told, five times, changing his range from 4500 to 2000 yards, thus spoiling the enemy's aim, and also bringing into play alternately his port and starboard batteries. Two of Montojo's cruisers, the *Don Juan* and the *Reina Cristina,* his flag-ship, made brave attempts at charging Dewey's flag-ship, but were stopped in mid-career by the devastating fire of the Ameri-

cans. At 7:35 A. M., after the fifth run, Dewey, informed erroneously that his ammunition was nearly gone, determined to retire for a time to take stock of his supply. Under cover of the smoke—both sides used brown powder—Dewey was of the opinion up to this time that the enemy fleet was still intact, as his own was, but just as he turned away, he saw through the smoke the plight of the Spaniards. All but one of their cruisers were in flames or drifting aimlessly shoreward. Finding he had ample ammunition, after his men had had breakfast and a rest, Dewey, at 11:16 A. M., returned to the scene of battle. In a few minutes the Sangley Point battery was silenced, and the *Don Antonio de Ulloa,* the last Spanish ship in line, her flag nailed to the mast and her guns still roaring defiance, sank at her moorings.

The results of this action, both immediate and remote, were remarkable. Dewey found to his amazement that no one had been killed in his squadron and that only 8 were wounded. On the other hand, the enemy's casualties amounted to 381. The Spanish squadron, consisting, like Dewey's, of unarmored units, had been annihilated by the volume of fire from the smaller-caliber quick-firers of the Americans. Dewey had again proved Farragut's axiom: "The best defense against the enemy's guns is a well directed fire from your own guns." The wounded Admiral Montojo surrendered himself and the remnants of his crews to the American commander. The forts at the entrance, their communications cut, also surrendered later. Dewey was master of a great bay and had its city cut off from the world. He now had a base. Last and most important, the victory destroyed Spanish sea power in the Philippines and gave the world the first definite intimation that a new naval power of great possibilities had appeared in the Far East to be reckoned with in international affairs in that quarter.



THE BATTLE OF MANILA BAY

C = *Castilla*	RC = *Reina Cristina*
A = *Don Juan de Austria*	MD = *Marques del Duero*
U = *Don Antonio de Ulloa*	IC = *Isla de Cuba*
M = *Manila*	IL = *Isla de Luzon*

Only movements before 11 A. M. are shown.

From a diagram of the battle by H. C. Washburn in the Department of English, U. S. Naval Academy.

During the three months between Dewey's victory and the fall of the city on August 13th under a combined attack by General Merritt and Commodore Dewey, events occurred in Manila Bay that showed how critically impor-

tant the sea power of America, consisting of a small navy and a smaller ocean merchant marine, was. Of this period Captain Sir Edward Chichester, in command of three British cruisers that arrived in the bay shortly after Dewey promulgated his blockade, declared to John Barrett: "Your Admiral [Dewey] accomplished by tact, firmness and good judgment in Manila Bay what many naval men would have thought only possible by war. Dewey is a natural fighter, but true fighter that he is, he prefers to win a peaceful victory. He is a great man." [1]

After Dewey's victory and the ensuing blockade, warships of England, Japan, Germany, and other nations arrived on the scene. Of these the Germans, who had one commercial house in Manila and a handful of nationals to protect, quickly gathered in the bay a squadron of five war-ships, besides colliers and a transport full of sailors, all under Admiral von Diedrichs,—a force more powerful than that of the American commander in control of the port. While the British with overwhelmingly greater interests in the Philippines were scrupulously careful in complying with the law of nations as applying to blockade and neutrality, the German admiral continually disregarded Dewey's blockade regulations, made reconnaissances in and about the harbor, landed sailors under pretense of drills, held friendly and secret conferences with the Spanish authorities, and interfered with the operations of the insurgents, who after the victory became the informal allies of the Americans. All this time American naval power was hanging in the balance, for Sampson had not yet destroyed Cervera's cruisers at Santiago and another Spanish squadron under Admiral Camara, more powerful than Dewey's, was on its way, via the Mediterranean, to the Philippines. It was therefore vitally important for Dewey to prevent intervention on

[1] Barrett, *Life of Dewey*, p. 115.

behalf of Spain by any third belligerent. His attitude toward Von Diedrichs was a remarkable combination of tact and firmness, in which he was powerfully backed by the British, who, in the person of their commander on the spot, Captain Chichester, stood for a strict regard for international law. The climax came when Admiral von Diedrichs tried to get all the naval commanders present to protest against the bombardment of the Manila defenses on August 13th. Of this incident Captain Chichester says:

> When the German admiral sent me word that he was coming aboard my ship to get me to join in a protest against Dewey's action, I looked up international law and spread the books out on my cabin table with the pages open and marked—all in a row—and when he came I said: "What can I do? This American admiral is so deadly right in all that he has done and all he proposes to do that if we protest we will surely show that we do not understand the law." Of course, there was nothing to be done and I did it.

During the bombardment Chichester placed his cruisers between the German squadron and Dewey's.

The real crux of the matter is that America with her weak sea power had by a masterly stroke during legitimate naval operations anticipated the German Emperor in the acquisition of the rich Philippine group. Until Dewey had put these islands on the map, the Germans hardly had given them a thought. The defenseless condition of the Philippines with the constant insurrections against the tyranny and mismanagement of a decadent nation would have made the way easy for their conquest by a covetous power. It was, in fact, an intimation from the British Government that Germany would take over the islands if America withdrew from them, which brought President McKinley to his final decision to insist upon their purchase from Spain as a part of the treaty of peace.

As Germany's attitude was hostile to the United States during the war, Great Britain's was friendly. The friendship of the British was fostered by the tactful and able diplomacy of John Hay, at that time American Ambassador at London. Owing to England's strict observance of the duties of neutrality, she refused to grant more coal to Admiral Camara at Suez than enough to carry him back to Spain and she rigidly enforced the twenty-four hour rule against him. Spain was therefore compelled, especially after the destruction of Cervera's ships, to abandon her attempt to send a new naval force to the Philippines. John Hay, who had thus helped to remove some of Dewey's worries, was an old friend of the commodore and had sent him after his victory a congratulatory letter in which he spoke of the "mingled wisdom and daring" of the victor of Manila Bay.

The far-reaching effects of Dewey's victory were seen in the subsequent negotiations regarding the integrity of China conducted with the great powers after the war by John Hay, now Secretary of State. On September 6, 1899, Hay announced his famous Open-Door policy, intended to stop exploitation of China, to keep her trade free for all nations, and to promote respect for her rights as a sovereign nation. This great American doctrine, which takes rank second only to that other great American state paper, the Monroe Doctrine, was supported by England and Japan. Hay's ideas, which, of course, required the assent of the American Senate, encountered much opposition not only from Russia and Germany but from his own people. Russia and Germany, while pretending to agree with the Open-Door privileges for all without special discrimination for any, continued their cynical policy of exploitation, which led to the Boxer movement in China against "foreign devils," and to the Russo-Japanese War, which with all its conse-

quences of later Japanese antagonism to the United States might have been prevented by following Hay's suggestions for an understanding between the United States, England, and Japan.

From John Hay's letters, since published, we now realize the opposition his ideas encountered in his own country. He says, for instance, in a confidential letter of date of September 20, 1900:

> About China, it is the devil's own mess. We cannot possibly publish all the facts without breaking off relations with several Powers. We shall have to do the best we can, and take the consequences, which will be pretty serious, I do not doubt. "Give and take"—the axiom of diplomacy to the rest of the world—is positively forbidden to us, by both the Senate and public opinion. We must take what we can and give nothing—which greatly narrows our possibilities.[1]

And in a similar confidential tone in a letter to Henry Adams of November 21, 1900, John Hay says:

> What a business this has been in China! So far we have got on by being honest and naïf. I do not clearly see where we are to come the delayed cropper. But it will come. At least we are spared the infamy of an alliance with Germany. I would rather, I think, be the dupe of China, than the chum of the Kaiser. Have you noticed how the world will take anything nowadays from a German? Bülow said yesterday in substance—"We have demanded of China everything we can think of. If we think of anything else we will demand that, and be d——d to you"—and not a man in the world kicks.[2]

It is quite within the range of possibility that there would never have been a World War in 1914—the delayed cropper which Hay seemed to predict would come—if the American people had listened more attentively in 1900 to their great statesman and diplomat. As England with her vast sea

[1] Thayer, *Life and Letters of John Hay*, II. 247.
[2] Thayer, *Life and Letters of John Hay*, II. 248.

power in 1823 backed the new doctrine of Monroe, so she was ready in 1900 to back the new American Open-door policy in China.

If, therefore, the sea power of the United States received a new impetus from Dewey's victory at Manila Bay and made possible a new interest in the Orient, culminating in Hay's Open-Door policy, it also acquired bases in the Pacific, strategically located, for the defense and protection of the future commercial and military sea power of the United States. England, the nation that has defined and developed sea power more than any other, has in past ages wisely made secure her sea routes by the acquisition of great naval bases. These should have, as Mahan points out, three requisites: position, strength, and resources; but it is rarely possible to secure all three of these advantages in one and the same base. Generally a strategic position, the most important of the three, is provided by nature; the other two qualities—strength and resources—must ordinarily be provided artificially by fortifications, mines, and submarines, and by supplies of food, coal, fuel-oil, dockyards, etc. Such bases England has in Gibraltar at the gateway of the Mediterranean, Malta at the very door of past and possible future enemies, and Hongkong, her advance post for a war against an Oriental nation.

The victory of Dewey—who was given the rank of admiral by a special law of Congress for his unique achievements—acquired for the United States similarly strategic positions in the Philippines and Guam, situated as they are at the doorway of the Orient. A few months after Dewey's victory, by a resolution of Congress of July 7, 1898, the way was cleared for the acquisition by the United States of the Hawaiian Islands, situated at the strategical center of the Pacific and at the cross-roads from Alaska, California, and the Isthmus of Panama, and from

Australia, Guam, the Philippines, China, and Japan.[1] The naval base at Pearl Harbor in the Hawaiian Islands has been, since its occupation, greatly developed and played an important part in the World War. Furthermore, by the American acquisition in 1899 of Tutuila in the Samoan group the United States got another potential base, making, like Guam relatively to Pearl Harbor, an advance base for operations in the Far East. Such bases are a vital element of sea power. They make a place of refuge from storms for merchantman and war-ship, a place for their repairs, docking, and refueling, and a resting-place for a retreating or crippled fleet. Had Dewey's ships been defeated at Manila Bay or suffered severe damages requiring spare parts, more ammunition, and hospitals for wounded ships and men, or had they been forced to retreat before the approach of Camara or at the threats of Von Diedrichs, Dewey's lack of a base would have been disastrous.

In conclusion we may say that American sea power, as represented by Dewey's insignificant force and his great victory, paved the way for vast commercial and naval expansion in the Pacific and for the western gateway to the Pacific from the future Panama Canal, whose eastern gateway and its approaches by way of the Caribbean were to be secured by another victory of American sea power in the same Spanish-American war.

[1] See map, p. 309.

CHAPTER XXIII

SEA POWER MAKES THE PANAMA CANAL POSSIBLE

AS in 1898—in Roosevelt's words "the most important year in this Republic since Lincoln died"—American sea power backing American diplomacy won the stepping-stones from America across the Pacific to the Orient, so in this same year American sea power entrenched itself on the Caribbean and paved the way for the linking of the two great oceans by the future Pamana Canal. Before 1898, with not a single base in the Caribbean, the United States had no control over that great pathway of commerce to the isthmus. After 1898, owing in very large measure to the naval victory of July 3, 1898, at Santiago, the United States had such control.

The American strategy of the Spanish War was conducted by the Naval War Board of three members, on which Admiral Mahan was the leading authority. The main feature of this strategy in the Atlantic was the isolation of Cuba, the cause of the war, and located at the very door of the United States, one hundred miles from its base at Key West. This isolation of the island was the object of President McKinley's proclamation of a blockade of a definite and limited portion of the coast of western Cuba, an order promulgated immediately on the breaking of diplomatic negotiations on April 21st.

To make the blockade effective required a force that finally aggregated 124 units.[1] Admiral Sampson, an officer

[1] Sampson, *Century Magazine*, Vol. 57, 887.

with a good record in the Civil War and later, who had been selected over the heads of his seniors to command the North Atlantic Squadron based on Key West, was in favor of immediate offensive naval operations against Havana with a view to its capture, but owing to the lack of troops and the vital need of keeping the limited American naval forces intact—a need all the more serious because of possible European intervention in behalf of Spain—the administration in Washington was in favor simply of the blockade. This would attain the same results without risking the ships. As Mahan so frequently points out, a blockade, by draining a nation of its dollars rather than of its blood, achieves results just as effectively and often more effectively than attacks on coast defenses. This is also in keeping with Mahan's humane plea in his writings and at the later Hague Conference against the exemption of private property from capture at sea. To deprive a belligerent of his resources for war-making wears out his power of resistance; a blockade with its consequent seizure of food and supplies destined for the civil and military population takes a belligerent by the throat and forces submission with far less loss of human life than actual fighting.

Accordingly, the objects of the Cuban blockade were threefold. The first object was to starve out the Spanish troops concentrated largely around Havana and Cienfuegos, where the only Cuban railways were. This object was so effectively attained that in less than two months the Spanish Governor-General of Cuba wrote that his soldiers and sailors in Havana had to exist on rice and hardtack. The population had previously been near starvation, for the Spanish policy of concentrating the rural population in the cities had destroyed virtually all agriculture. A second object was the destruction of Spanish commerce, which consisted of a few merchantmen connecting the island with

the mother country. And a third object was to force Spain to send naval and military relief the long journey of four thousand miles, a distance which would endanger the communications of any such expedition and be a great drain on Spain's limited resources.

This last purpose of the American Government was realized in the Spanish naval force under Admiral Cervera, mobilized before the war at the Cape Verde Islands, from which it was to sail, a week after the war began, to its fate. Cervera, who had for several years foreseen the possibility of a clash with the United States, had vainly urged a corrupt and dilatory government to prepare for war. In January, 1898, he wrote to a relative:

> About two years ago I wrote you a letter concerning our condition to go to war with the United States. I requested you to keep that letter in case some day it should be necessary to bring it to light in defense of my memory or myself when we had experienced the sad disappointment prepared for us by the stupidity of some, the cupidity of others, and the incapability of all, even of those with the best of intentions.

After mentioning specific instances of Spanish administrative inefficiency, such as the war-ship *Cataluna,* begun eight years before and with her hull in 1898 still unfinished, and the three cruisers *Vizcaya, Oquendo,* and *Maria Teresa* finally completed at Bilboa only by the efforts of an English naval constructor, he continues:

> But my purpose is not to accuse, but to explain why we may and must expect disaster. . . . As it would be a crime to say all this publicly to-day, I hold my tongue, and go forth resignedly to face the trials which God may be pleased to send me. I am sure that we will do our duty, for the spirit of the navy is excellent.

Such was the unpreparedness of Spain for war with the United States that Cervera had urged his government to

grant independence to Cuba to end the constant friction with America that he saw must culminate in armed conflict and in disaster to Spain.

But though the strategists in Washington suspected that Spain was unprepared, they made their plans to meet an equal on the seas. On paper, and from all available official sources, the two navies were equal. So nearly was this supposed to be the case that Mahan says one American officer of excellent judgment asserted that the loss of the *Maine* had tipped the scales in favor of Spain in the Atlantic, and as if to favor this view the American naval authorities ordered the *Oregon,* one of the best ships in the navy, to make the long journey from the West Coast to reenforce the Atlantic fleet,—a hazardous undertaking in the face of Cervera's supposedly swift and powerful cruisers at Cape Verde. The British authority Admiral Colomb in his "Naval Warfare," in contrasting American naval preparedness and mobilization before April 21st with Spain's inactivity, says, "The one navy was very much alive, and the other was to all intents and purposes a dead one before the war opened." Colomb calculated the strength of the two navies in the ratio of three to two in favor of the United States. He shows that at the outbreak of war America had 69 war-ships of all types, among them the four 10,000-ton first-class battleships of the *Oregon* class, to Spain's 49, the largest of which was 9,900 tons. Its initial force the United States increased during the next three months by 67 more, making 136 in all. The increments were for the most part extemporized types, such as yachts, coasters, and some fine scouts like the *Harvard,* the *Yale,* and the *St. Louis,* acquired from the only transatlantic line under American registry in the period before the war, when the American merchant marine on the high seas was conspicuous by its absence.

The lack of an ocean merchant marine on the part of both belligerents made the war anomalous in this respect as it was in other respects. Though neither belligerent had been a signatory to the Declaration of Paris of 1856, which prohibited privateering, neither party sent out privateers and neither made any prizes worth speaking of. United States war-ships captured all told half a dozen merchantmen, while the Spaniards took only three prizes of any size. The war was also unusual in that neither belligerent made any serious attempt to gain or dispute control of the seas.

This control of the seas Cervera's forces of four cruisers and three torpedo-boat destroyers—a type of which the United States had none—might, if properly equipped and handled, have gained. Such a supposedly fast and homogeneous squadron naval strategists speak of as a "fleet in being." This is a force not in itself in command of the sea, but one whose very existence is a continual menace to the enemy, preventing the latter from concentrating on any definite line of operations. Until the "fleet in being" is destroyed, the enemy cannot tell when or where a blow may fall. He must, therefore, divide or deconcentrate his forces until he has destroyed the "fleet in being," which is continually threatening his flank and his lines of communication. Like the wary fox, such a fleet may cause its pursuers to scatter to all the four points of the compass before it is run to cover. But like the fox, too, it is generally caught sooner or later. It is one of the few resources of the weaker sea power. Cervera's fleet, before it was cornered, not only postponed the sailing of American troops under Shafter, but threw the whole Atlantic coast into a state verging on panic.

This panic and the popular clamor of the coast towns for protection caused the failure for a time of America's sea power to concentrate on the important phase of the

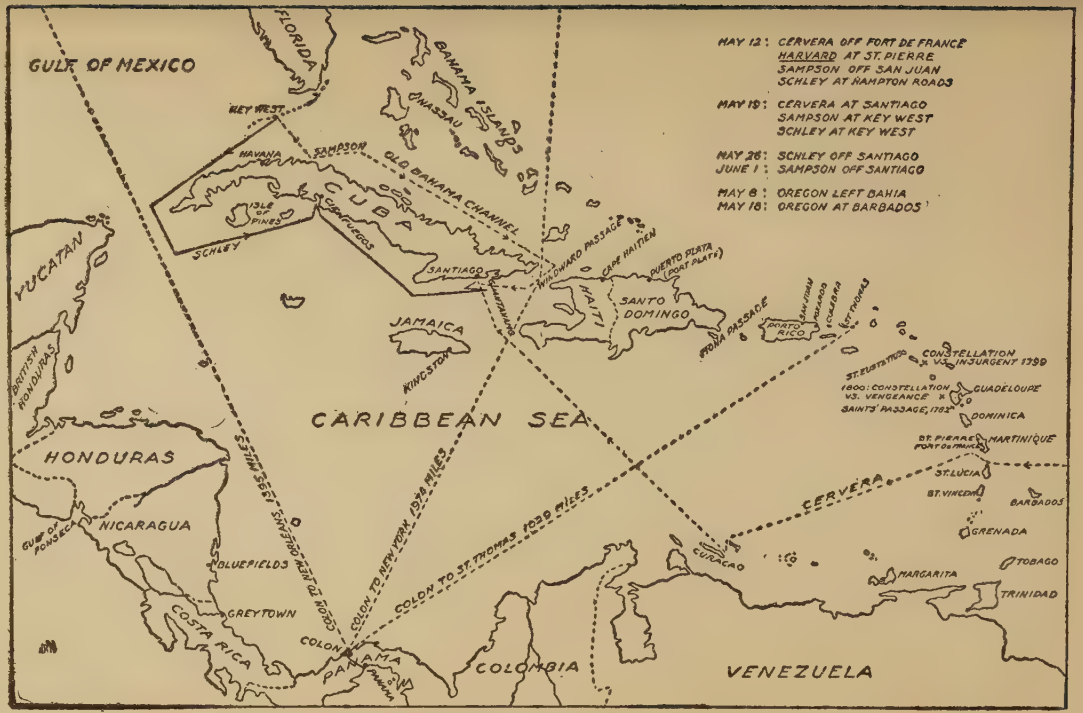
war, the blockade of Cuba and the patrol of the Gulf and the Caribbean. While Sampson retained the backbone of the Atlantic fleet at Key West, Commodore Schley was detailed with his "Flying Squadron" to take his station at Hampton Roads, a position on the coast, where with his speedy cruisers he could ward off an attack on Baltimore or New York, or could quickly join Sampson at Key West. Another smaller force, the Northern Patrol Squadron under Commodore Howell, was stationed off the New England coast, in case Cervera should decide to waste his valuable powder in shooting at summer resorts on the coast of Maine. Admiral Colomb is rather sarcastic regarding this panic in American coast towns in 1898. He remarks that Englishmen do not think their fleet is doing its duty in time of war unless it is continually out of sight of British shores, while Americans want their fleet hugging close to their shores in war time. Colomb and Mahan both regard this point of view of Americans as due to a misconception of the functions of navies. Coast towns, in the opinion of naval strategists, should be defended by forts, batteries, mines at harbor entrances, and submarines. The function of such harbor protection is defensive; the proper function of fleets is offensive. Their work is on the high seas to seek and destroy the enemy's fleet. They are wasted and demoralized by being required to do service which a proper system of coast defense can do so much more economically and effectively.

On April 29th, as before noted, Cervera left the Cape Verde Islands with his four cruisers, the *Cristobal Colon,* the *Vizcaya,* the *Maria Teresa,* and the *Oquendo,* and his three torpedo-boat destroyers *Pluton, Terror,* and *Furor.* He had to sail finally with poor ammunition and defective breech-blocks for his guns, and lacking turret guns in one of his cruisers. Owing to trouble with his engines and un-

scraped bottoms, he averaged only eight knots in crossing the Atlantic. He did not arrive in the Caribbean until long after he had been expected. To get into touch with Spain, he dropped the *Terror* at Martinique on May 11th, and later, on May 14th, he coaled at Curaçao,—a fact which was quickly cabled to Washington.

Sampson, off Havana, had received word on May 1st from the Navy Deparment of Cervera's departure from Cape Verde. He at once proceeded to Porto Rico. As this was the colony nearest to Spain's shores, and as it had ample coal supplies, Sampson believed San Juan would be Cervera's first objective. As soon as the news of the sighting of Cervera's squadron at Martinique was received, Sampson from Porto Rico and Schley from Hampton Roads concentrated at Key West, whence, after coaling, Sampson returned on May 21st to block Havana against Cervera and Schley proceeded to the second port of Cuba, Cienfuegos, on May 22d. Meanwhile, on the 19th, Cervera had slipped into Santiago. Though the United States Signal Corps immediately telegraphed information of Cervera's arrival at Santiago, Schley, deceived by a false report from a merchantman and by smoke rising behind the forts at the entrance to Cienfuegos, was sure he had Cervera bottled up there. And Sampson did not dare leave the blockade of Havana before the various rumors of Cervera's whereabouts were confirmed. Not until the latter had been ten days at Santiago did the two American commanders concentrate their forces before this port. All this shows how difficult it was to run the fox to cover. Admiral Cervera regretted ever afterward that he had, of all ports in Cuba, chosen Santiago, for the fox's hole turned out to be a trap.

Schley on his arrival off Santiago instituted a blockade of the port at a distance of twenty-five miles, which Sampson on June 2d decreased by maintaining a cordon of ships



THE WEST INDIES SHOWING RELATION TO PANAMA CANAL

From the *Century Atlas*, with naval movements of fleets in Spanish-American War from *Report of Secretary of Navy* for 1898, volume II.

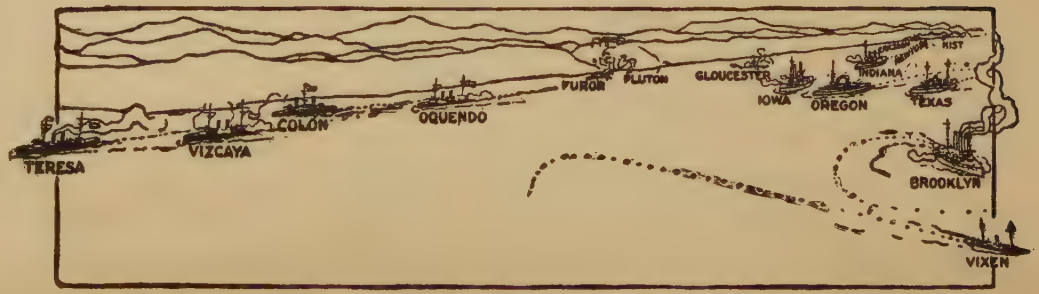
in a semicircle with a radius of from six to four miles in the daytime and three at night. He kept some smaller vessels and steam-launches on patrol within this semicircle. At night Sampson, after experimenting with many search-lights, finally kept one battle-ship stationary at a distance of two miles, focusing its powerful search-light all night on the entrance, with a supporting battle-ship broadside to the land batteries to protect it against any fire from the shore. The question has often been asked why Cervera did not make his sortie at night. He answered this question later by stating that such a sortie in the very narrow channel in the face of this glaring light, as dazzling as the sun, would have resulted in piling up his cruisers on top of one another. Still, it remains true that between June 1st and July 3d, the day of Cervera's sortie, there were several very dark, rainy, and squally nights, which would have favored a bold dash; but Admiral Cervera, brave officer that he was, was lacking in this quality of dash.

Besides this close blockade of the harbor exit the American commander made other dispositions to make Santiago Harbor a trap to Cervera's squadron. He had ordered Lieutenant Hobson on June 3d to sink the collier *Merrimac* across the narrow channel, a bold exploit, which, however, failed to block the passage. The deed called forth the admiration of Admiral Cervera, who sent a special message to Sampson that Hobson and his crew were safe. This message illustrated the lack of animus, a characteristic of the war on both sides. On June 6th Sampson enfiladed the batteries at the entrance to test their strength. On June 7th he detailed the *Marblehead*, the *Yankee*, and the *St. Louis* to seize Guantanamo Bay, forty miles east of Santiago, as a coaling-station and base of operations. This force cut two telegraphic cables to Guantanamo and Santiago, operations like the earlier and later cable-cuttings that

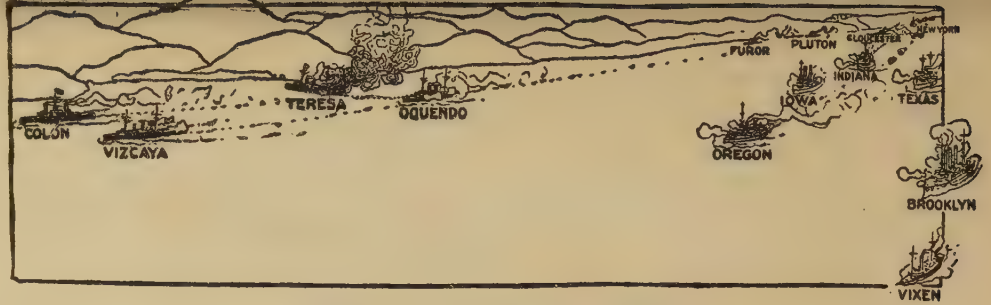
helped to isolate Cuban cities from one another and from foreign communications. On June 10th this same force landed some marines, the first American troops on Cuban soil, who henceforth stood guard over Guantanamo Bay. Later in the month Sampson held conferences with the Cuban General Garcia and his insurgents, who held the coast east and west of Santiago. Furthermore, on General Shafter's arrival with his transports Sampson's fleet protected the landing on June 22d to 24th at Daiquiri and Siboney, half-way between Santiago and Guantanamo, of the American troops, which later coöperated with the fleet, attacked Santiago from the rear, and helped to make Cervera's position in the harbor untenable. Lastly, on July 1st Sampson hurled 106 8-inch shells at a range of 8500 yards at invisible targets in the bay and the city of Santiago, a novel achievement in its day. On this same day, July 1st, and the following day, the army made its drive, which ended in the desperate fighting at El Caney and San Juan Hill. At the latter place Colonel Roosevelt's "Rough Riders" made their dramatic dash,—a dash that helped powerfully to land the Colonel in the governor's chair of the Empire State the same autumn. Cut off from communications, in great need of coal and the most necessary supplies, and under continual bombardment from land and sea, Cervera was forced to make his desperate attempt to gain the open sea.

A little before nine o'clock on the bright Sunday morning of July 3d, Cervera with his four cruisers and two destroyers made his long-expected dash. As he came out, he turned sharp to the westward and hugged the shore. Sampson, in his flag-ship, the *New York,* was at the moment four miles to the eastward, having left the line to confer with General Shafter. He at once flew the signal "Close in toward harbor entrance and attack vessels," an order which the rest of his squadron had anticipated. Despite

Position No. 1. The Spanish ships coming out



Position No. 2. The American fleet closing in



Position No. 3. The battle at its height

Position No. 4. Four Spanish vessels disabled

DECISIVE ACTION OF BATTLE OF SANTIAGO

Drawn by Howard F. Sprague for the article "The Atlantic Fleet in the Spanish War," by Rear Admiral W. Sampson, in the *Century Magazine*, Vol. 57, p. 908.

the advantage of a running start, two of the Spanish cruisers, the *Maria Teresa* and the *Oquendo,* were quickly overtaken, and under the withering fire of the Americans forced ashore in flames. Schley's flag-ship, the *Brooklyn,* leading the chase, had circled to starboard to avoid a desperate threat of ramming from the *Teresa* just before the latter was beached. By making this loop the *Brooklyn* nearly rammed the *Texas.* At eleven o'clock the *Vizcaya,* also in flames, was forced to beach herself. The *Colon,* the fastest of the four cruisers, was now six miles ahead of the leading Americans, the *Brooklyn* and the *Oregon.* At one o'clock the *Oregon* succeeded in placing a shell across the *Colon's* bows. A quarter of an hour later the *Colon,* virtually uninjured, lowered her colors and ran toward shore, where she was scuttled by her crew. The little American *Gloucester,* a converted yacht in command of Wainwright, and the nearest ship to the entrance, had, despite her small guns and vulnerability, headed straight for the escaping squadron and, though greatly outclassed, forced the destroyer *Pluton* ashore and then pursued the *Furor,* which was finally sunk by a shot from the *New York,* at this moment hastening at seventeen knots speed in pursuit of the bigger game. It was extremely hard luck for Admiral Sampson—who had been so vigilant in his efforts to bottle up Cervera's squadron—that he had to be absent when the battle began and arrived just too late to receive the surrender of the *Colon.*

The battle of Santiago may be said to have ended the war. Though the American markmanship was good, it was not remarkable when we consider the close range at which the battle was fought. At Santiago—where smokeless powder was given its first practical test—the large-caliber guns of the Americans, which used the old powder, made only two hits and the two shots struck the same spot.

On the other hand, the Spaniards made virtually no hits at all, as was proved by the American casualties. Sampson's fleet had one man killed and one man seriously wounded, while the Spaniards lost 600 in killed alone. In addition, the Americans took 1300 prisoners, including Admiral Cervera.

The preliminary terms of peace were agreed upon by the protocol of August 12th, the day that Porto Rico fell and the day before the city of Manila surrendered. By the articles of the resulting peace, concluded at Paris on December 10, 1898, Spain gave up her sovereignty over Cuba and ceded to the United States Porto Rico, Guam, and the Philippine Islands. In the two battles of Manila and Santiago American sea power had won a quick, sharp decision.

Here was surely glory enough for all hands in the American Navy. But as in the War of 1812, the glory was clouded by a later controversy over the question as to who was in command, and therefore who won, at the battle of Santiago,—Sampson or Schley. After the victory newspaper men and cartoonists conducted a campaign that gradually assumed much bitterness and brought on naval and congressional inquiries. In allusion to early newspaper statements, Schley in a despatch to the Navy Department, dated July 10, 1898, said:

> Feel some mortification that the newspaper accounts of July 6th have attributed the victory on July 3d almost entirely to me. Victory was secured by the force under the command [of the] Commander-in-Chief, North Atlantic Squadron, and to him the honor is due.

The action had been fought on the general plans given by Sampson to his captains a month before; in the crisis every captain, using his own initiative, carried out the

spirit of Sampson's battle order to clear ship and close in on the enemy. While Schley "did his duty on board the *Brooklyn* . . . his ship thereafter rendering magnificent and most creditable service,"[1] he acted as a captain of his own ship, not as a commander of the fleet. On the day of the battle, as Secretary Long later wrote, "the result would have been the same if both Sampson and Schley had been ten thousand miles away." And as President Roosevelt, who later reviewed the unanimous decision in Sampson's favor of the naval court of inquiry, wrote, "After the battle was joined not a helm was shifted, not a pound of steam was put on in the engine-room aboard any ship actively engaged, in obedience to the order of either Sampson or Schley, save on their own two vessels. It was a captains' fight." It is only just to add, however, that Admiral Dewey, the presiding officer of the court of inquiry, while joining in the censure of the court for Schley's dilatoriness in making the blockade of Cervera effective and for the loop incident of the *Brooklyn,* expressed the opinion that Schley was in command at the time of the victory of Santiago. As a result of this controversy, Sampson, broken in health by the strain of his responsibility before the battle and deeply disappointed by the later events, went to his death without promotion and without the thanks of Congress or of his country for his great achievement in having his fleet so thoroughly prepared when the test came that the resulting annihilation of the enemy with the loss of only one life in his own force closely parallels Dewey's victory.

But above and beyond the immediate results of the battle of Santiago, the more remote results were far-reaching. Before the victory the United States had no control over the Caribbean Sea, the approach to the Isthmus of

[1] Long, *The American Navy,* II. 48.

Panama. To-day, due to the victory of American sea power in Cuba, it has. After the war the United States Army continued to occupy Cuba until the inhabitants could set up a constitution, elect a president, and take over the reins of government. On March 2, 1901, the United States Congress added to the Army Appropriation Bill for that year the so-called Platt Amendment. By this the new government of Cuba was to agree not to enter into any treaty with a foreign power to impair its independence, not to contract any public debts that could not be paid by the ordinary revenues of the island, to permit the United States to intervene in the interest of maintaining Cuban independence, and to sell or lease lands to the United States for coaling-stations and naval bases. These provisions, which were intended to uphold the Monroe Doctrine by insuring the independence of Cuba and by intrenching the sea power of the United States in the Gulf and the Caribbean, were agreed to by the constituent assembly of Cuba. Accordingly, on May 20, 1902, the United States turned over the government of the island to a Cuban president, duly elected in accordance with its new constitution.

The United States had now acquired Guantanamo Bay and Porto Rico as potential bases for its future sea power in the Caribbean. It remained only to give protection and resources to these by fortifications, dry-docks, coal-, ammunition-, and supply-depots to make them powerful bases. It is often said by English writers that Jamaica is their key to the Caribbean. But Porto Rico and Guantanamo, situated on the communications of Jamaica with the mother country, and near the vast resources of the United States, give the sea power of America the grip on that key. The Virgin Islands, more recently acquired by the United States, and lying on the eastern extremity of the Caribbean farthest toward Europe, make a possible advance base

relatively to Guantanamo. These two, Guantanamo and the Virgin Islands, are to the Caribbean what Pearl Harbor and Guam are to the Pacific. As the great British bases, Gibraltar and Malta, are to the sea control by England of the Mediterranean and the Suez Canal, so are Guantanamo and the Virgin Islands to the sea control of the Caribbean and the Panama Canal. By means of the latter, American naval fleets will make secure the great route of American merchant fleets to the Orient.

During the Spanish-American War, the long trip of the *Oregon* (fifteen thousand miles via Cape Horn), at a critical time when her presence in the Atlantic might mean the difference between victory and defeat, called the attention of statesmen in America to the need of a canal across the Isthmus. The old Clayton-Bulwer Treaty between England and the United States contained a self-denying clause, by which each agreed not to gain exclusive control over any future canal. As soon as John Hay became Secretary of State in the autumn of 1898, he gave the matter of the abrogation of the old treaty serious attention. Accordingly, Henry White, the American Ambassador to Great Britain, got a promise from Lord Salisbury to substitute a new agreement, with the proviso that tolls for the ships of all nations passing through should be the same. In due course the Secretary of State engineered the first Hay-Pauncefote Treaty, which provided for the complete neutralization of the canal, and which would prevent the United States from fortifying it, or closing it to its enemies. On this first treaty, the Governor of New York, Theodore Roosevelt, the man destined by fate to push through the building of the future canal, wrote Hay the following friendly but illuminating criticism:

> If the proposed canal had been in existence in '98 the *Oregon* could have come more quickly through to the Atlantic; but this

fact would have been far outweighed by the fact that Cervera's fleet would have had open to it the chance of itself going through the canal, and thence sailing to attack Dewey or to menace our stripped Pacific Coast. If that canal is open to the warships of an enemy, it is a menace to us in time of war; it is an added burden, an additional strategic point to be guarded by our fleet. If fortified by us, it becomes one of the most potent sources of our sea strength. Unless so fortified it strengthens against us every nation whose fleet is larger than ours. One prime reason for fortifying our great seaports is to unfetter our fleet, to release it for offensive purposes; and the proposed canal would fetter it again, for our fleet would have to watch it, and therefore do the work which a fort should do; and what it could do much better.[1]

Owing to these objections, the first draft of the treaty failed of ratification in the United States Senate. But the later draft, the Hay-Pauncefote Treaty of November 18, 1901, giving the United States the sole right to construct, maintain, police, and fortify the canal, cleared the way for the great undertaking. As Colombia haggled over the price—$10,000,000—for the strip through the Isthmus, President Roosevelt, with his characteristic "big-stick" policy, immediately recognized the revolutionists in the new republic of Panama, and made a treaty with them, which was ratified by the Senate on February 23, 1904. This treaty provided for the payment to Panama of $10,000,000 for a strip five miles on each side of the axis of the canal, with an annual rental of $250,000 to begin nine years thereafter.

On May 4, 1904, the work began. Under the forceful methods of Roosevelt, who put Colonel Goethals of the Engineer Corps of the United States Army in charge, rapid progress was made. The canal was completed in ten years and was opened to traffic on August 15, 1914, in time to render important service to the Allied and American navies

[1] Thayer, *Life and Letters of John Hay*, II. 340.

in the World War. It is forty-three miles long and cost $375,000,000 to build. In addition to this, the United States Government has spent $30,000,000 for fortifications, and has constructed, besides repair-shops, terminal facilities, etc., five huge steel piers, and a thousand-foot dry-dock. During the first year of operation, 4,500,000 tons of shipping passed through the canal, an amount that has rapidly increased, reaching a total of 9,371,339 tons in 1918. The tolls, which after a controversy in Congress were finally made the same for all nations, have averaged five to six millions dollars a year.

On August 5, 1914, the American Government in order to forestall any foreign attempt to construct a rival waterway in Nicaragua and also further to intrench American sea power on the Pacific side of the new canal, concluded a treaty with Nicaragua, in which ratifications were exchanged, June 22, 1916. This treaty, in consideration of the payment of $3,000,000, granted to the United States the sole right to construct a canal by the Nicaraguan route and also leased to the United States a naval base on the Pacific coast in the Gulf of Fonseca and coaling-stations on Great Corn and Little Corn islands. The three million dollars were to be applied to the public debt of Nicaragua to European countries. This was in keeping with a policy inaugurated by President Roosevelt—the most far-reaching extension of the Monroe Doctrine that has ever been made —by which the United States Government constituted itself the receiver or trustee for Latin-American countries, like the Dominican Republic, to prevent the seizure of their custom-houses or territory for debts incurred to European countries. Germany, especially, had shown a marked tendency to regard the Monroe Doctrine as a scrap of paper, while England more and more tacitly recognized this great American policy. Roosevelt's rather sharp ac-

tion in virtually depriving Colombia of the Canal Zone and in supervising the finances of the Dominican Republic marked a great change in regard to the Monroe Doctrine. Once feared by Europe and tacitly accepted by Latin America as a benevolent protectorship by the great northern nation, it came to be an object of fear and suspicion by Spanish America. This fear of America's intentions President Wilson tried to still by his Pan-American policy, as expressed in his Mobile speech: "The United States will never again seek one additional foot of territory by conquest."

But the United States will never again need to make new conquests, for its sea power in the Spanish War in 1898 not only gave it great bases on the Pacific and on the Caribbean but, still more important, it made possible the Panama Canal, the realization of a dream of the human race since the days of Balboa, the most strategic fifty miles in the world, an achievement that has cut nature's long and dangerous sea route via the Horn by ten thousand miles.

CHAPTER XXIV

AMERICAN SEA POWER IN THE WORLD WAR

FOR America the World War was as essentially a maritime struggle as the American Revolution or the conflict with Napoleon and the War of 1812. Though an army of two million men fought in France under the Stars and Stripes, the causes of the war, and the arrival of those millions on the battle-field, were closely related to the sea and maritime supremacy. In both 1812 and 1917 the American people were finally drawn into the maelstrom of war after a long diplomatic struggle over the freedom of the seas. In each case they fought against the belligerent which endangered not American property—though this also suffered—but the lives of American citizens. The results of both wars had predominantly maritime aspects. As in the days of Jefferson, so in Wilson's time, the hostilities in Europe created almost automatically a merchant marine that took its place next to Great Britain's and threatened her commercial supremacy at sea. With these facts in mind it ought to be easier to understand the part American sea power played in the recent conflict.

Although the trend of international agreement had been for some years in the direction of greater freedom of the seas in war time, as expressed by the Declaration of London of 1909, the provisions of the latter document had not been fully accepted by all the powers at the outbreak of the war. Although it did not make absolute contraband of cotton,

copper, rubber, and wool, it could hardly be expected that these indispensable materials for modern warfare would be allowed to pass freely to the fighting nations, and, accordingly, neutral trade was thrown back upon the general principles enunciated by the Declaration of Paris of 1856, or to the almost chaotic conditions of the last great war, the Napoleonic struggle. In fact, the same mooted questions arose: What is a blockade? What is contraband? Do free ships make free goods? Shall ultimate destination of commodities be the governing principle? And is it right to change the letter of international law because the advance of invention has changed methods of warfare? All these questions, and the age-old discussion as to whether or not a violation of international law by one belligerent justifies violation in retaliation by the other belligerent, appeared in the diplomatic contest between the United States, as the chief neutral, and both Great Britain and Germany; they are the same questions which Europe and America discussed in 1805 and in 1861 to 1865.

As a neutral, the first difficulties encountered by the United States were with Great Britain, the power in command of the sea. Early in the war Great Britain virtually abolished the distinction between absolute and conditional contraband, the latter including articles, such as food-stuffs and copper, which could not be seized if they were to be used by the civilian activities of the belligerent but would be contraband if proved to be intended for the military forces. As all articles were contraband, no trade with German ports was open to neutrals, but it was possible for the United States to ship into Holland, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and Italy every sort of article which might be used in those countries. A few hours would suffice to carry these materials into Germany, and it became evident that unless the Allies prohibited such commerce they could

impose no real economic boycott on Germany. They accordingly fell back upon the American doctrine of continuous voyage, or ultimate destination, as it is sometimes called, the crux of the decisions in the *Polly* and the *Essex* cases in the Napoleonic Wars, and the subject of such diplomatic manœuvering as preceded the settlement of the cases of the *Springbok* and the *Bermuda* during the Civil War. But the situation of the Allies was worse than that of Great Britain in the earlier period. Modern transportation had so developed that the neutral countries adjacent to Germany were economically a part of the empire, and even if the materials imported were actually consumed in neutral territory, such articles as food-stuffs, and such metals as were produced by the neutrals themselves, would be released for export to Germany. If allowed to import food from America, Denmark and Holland could without stint pour their milk, their cheese, their beef, and even their wheat and forage into the Rhineland, and as the German Navy, strategically placed at Kiel, where it could strike either into the Baltic or the North Sea, controlled the Baltic absolutely, the meat and the minerals of Scandinavia could quickly pass across its narrow waters to the German ports of Lübeck, Stettin, Danzig, and Königsberg.

Under the strict letter of international law it is clear that the United States was right in its contention that such articles as food-stuffs and cotton were not necessarily contraband and could not be proved by Great Britain to be actually destined to the military forces of Germany. As, however, the Allies regarded their vital interests as involved in the decision, it was natural for sea power to rule. It was clear that, as in its protests against English and Napoleonic restrictions on free trade, the United States did not regard its vital interests as jeopardized,—for to go to war would destroy this very trade,—and that it was

unlikely to go to extremes. The naval supremacy of the Allies continued therefore to exert pressure on neutral trade, and when the United States entered the war it did not scruple to join its associates in compelling such neutrals as Holland and Norway not only to forbid the exportation of articles imported from the United States but also to prevent the export to Germany of articles produced in the country which might be substituted for them.

On the question of blockade the British were curiously enough forced back to their position in the Napoleonic Wars. The development of submarine mines, of submarines, and of aircraft made any close watch of the German coast impracticable. The British patrols were therefore shifted to the stretch of water between Scotland and Iceland. As the Straits of Dover were dominated by British destroyers, there was no chance for vessels to enter the North Sea from the Atlantic without being discovered and searched. Furthermore, by the Order in Council of March 15, 1915,—in which, however, the word blockade was not used,—all merchant vessels which might be carrying goods to Germany directly or indirectly were to be brought into a British port and their status decided by the British authorities. Only such cargoes as received a pass from the Admiralty could proceed to their destinations. Such a revival of the principle "No trade except through England," was protested against by the United States on the ground that it amounted to a blockade of neutral ports, even though the United States was willing to concede the legality of the distant blockade of Germany. Notwithstanding these protests British sea power exercised the decisive influence, and the restrictions continued, as they had in the days of Napoleon. Even under these difficulties American tonnage in the foreign trade, as in 1793 and 1803, increased with rapid strides, and signs of the revival of a respectable

merchant marine in the foreign trade appeared on the horizon.

As Great Britain's superiority at sea thus caused invasion of neutral rights during the first two years of the war, so Germany's naval inferiority to the Allies, as that of France in 1798, brought the Teutonic empire to the use of methods of warfare at sea which had not been contemplated in international law. First, she protected her North Sea coast with submarine mines; next, she scattered mines in various places in the North Sea to sink British naval vessels patrolling in that area; thirdly, she sent out her submarines to sink Allied ships of war and to capture and destroy Allied merchantmen bearing supplies or troops to the British Isles or the channel ports of France.

Moreover, on February 4, 1915, Germany announced that her submarines would sink Allied vessels without warning and without visit and search. The United States at once vigorously protested against such a practice, which would involve great danger to Americans traveling on British and French vessels, but not till March 28th, when the British steamship *Falaba* was sunk in St. George's Channel and one American lost his life, did a real case arise. Then, on May 7th, off the southern coast of Ireland, the *Lusitania,* of the British Cunard Line, was hit by two torpedoes and went down in eighteen minutes. As the chief transatlantic passenger steamer at the time, she carried many passengers, 1267 in all, and a crew of 702. There were a large number of Americans on board, 114 of whom were lost. This outrage roused great indignation in the United States, and many persons demanded an immediate declaration of war. The *Lusitania* was unarmed, and carried no munitions. Its only contraband was a quantity of empty shell cases, some army saddles, and a

large amount of food-stuffs. The sinking could not be justified by any of the rules of international law recognized by the United States, for by these the safety of all persons on board a vessel must be assured before it could be destroyed. The sinking was, however, in such entire accord with the announced policy of the Germans that the kaiser could not disavow the act.

The flame of indignation which this outrage produced in the United States, however, and the protests of the American Government, so influenced the German authorities that on June 5th a secret order came from the emperor that passenger vessels, even of the enemy, should not be sunk.[1] But when in March of the following year this order was violated and the *Sussex*, a French steamer plying between Folkestone and Dieppe, was torpedoed and several Americans lost, President Wilson on May 4, 1916, secured from the Germans a promise that the practice of sinking ships without warning or without attempt to save life should be abandoned, unless the ship attempted to escape or offered resistance.

This situation remained until January 31, 1917, when Von Bernstorff, the German Ambassador to the United States, notified the American Government that on the following day Germany would rescind her promise of May 4, 1916, and that hereafter within a specified war zone that surrounded the Allied coasts of Western Europe and included virtually all the Mediteranean, she would sink without warning, and without attempt to save life, all ships, neutral and belligerent alike, which were found in those waters. The exceptions, by which one ship a week was allowed to pass from the United States to England by a prescribed route, if painted in a peculiar manner, and if it

[1] Von Tirpitz, *My Memoirs*, II. 157.

carried a certificate from the American Government that no contraband was on board, only increased the insult to our maritime rights.

Upon receipt of this notice President Wilson broke off diplomatic relations with Germany, and began arming merchant ships with navy guns operated by naval gun crews, although Congress, because of a filibuster, failed to give him specific authority to do so. As Germany did not recede from her position, and as several American steamships were sunk on March 16th, 17th, 21st, and April 1st, the President went before Congress on April 2d, and in a speech which has become the classic expression of the issues of the World War, recommended a declaration that war existed between the two nations. Already 226 American citizens had lost their lives from German ruthlessness. It was this issue of humanity rather than trade, as in the days preceding the War of 1812, that formed the immediate justification for war. The President said:

> I am not now thinking of the loss of property involved, immense and serious as that is, but only of the wanton and wholesale destruction of the lives of non-combatants, men, women, and children, engaged in pursuits which have always, even in the darkest periods of modern history, been deemed innocent and legitimate. Property can be paid for; the lives of peaceful and innocent people cannot be. The present German submarine warfare against commerce is a warfare against mankind.

Accordingly, on April 6, 1917, Congress passed a declaration of war, which was approved by the President and went into immediate effect.

The reasons for the entrance of the United States into the World War were thus, as has been indicated, almost wholly maritime. Likewise, the participation of the United States, while not wholly maritime, was to be dependent largely upon maritime factors. A brief consideration of

the situation of the Entente Allies in April, 1917, will, it is believed, make clear the importance of these factors, and justify the lines of activity which the sea power of the United States took to bring about a decisive victory for democracy and civilization.

By the beginning of 1917, it had become apparent that a decisive victory for either side was not probable on the western front, the strategical center of military operations. The Allies were, furthermore, sustained very largely in their war of attrition by their superior resources, due to the fact that being in command of the sea, they could draw on America and most of the world for the munitions and food which their fighting armies demanded. But the menace of the submarine had not been conquered, and unless overcome might at any moment threaten the whole success of the military movements. Up to April, 1917, nearly 7,000,000 tons of shipping had been lost through submarine attack and the usual accidents of navigation. To replace this loss only about 4,500,000 tons had been constructed, and the Germans believed that six weeks of unrestricted submarine warfare would so decrease the available tonnage that Great Britain would see starvation facing her and sue for peace. Although the rate at which sinkings had been going on during 1916 had been much greater than ever before, about 200,000 tons per month, it is probably true that even at such a rate the actual objective of the Germans could not have been attained. But with the later inauguration of unrestricted warfare, not only did neutral vessels hesitate to take the sea, but the actual sinkings increased to such a figure that they threatened the security of the Allied cause and the possibility of bringing American troops to Europe and supplying them there with food and munitions. In the latter part of 1916 submarines were sinking from 300,000 to 400,-

000 tons each month; in the second quarter of 1917, they sank over 2,000,000 tons, and in October of that year sent over 500,000 tons to the bottom. Almost as much shipping was lost during the nine months of 1917 which followed the entrance of the United States into the war as had been sunk in all the period from the outbreak of the war to that date.

The objectives before America which concerned her naval and maritime activity were therefore clearly twofold: first, to assist in the anti-submarine campaign, reduce the losses to shipping, and prevent attacks on transports laden with American troops; second, to furnish such an increase of ships to the Allies as would be adequate to maintain their supplies and to throw upon the western front enough men and munitions to bring decisive victory.

In the operations of the navy under the first head the most important elements were destroyers, submarine-chasers, the convoy system, and the Northern Mine Barrage. In 1916, when the unprepared condition of the United States began to be appreciated, and a three-year building-program for the navy was authorized, the most important feature was the construction of fifty destroyers during the first year. Experience had demonstrated that these powerful vessels were the most successful weapon against the submarine, because of their speed, their cruising-radius, and their armament of torpedoes and guns. When war came the number of destroyers to be built was increased, and by the end of 1917 orders for from two hundred to three hundred were placed, all to be completed by 1919. One was even turned out in fifty days.

The destroyers were the first American naval units to arrive in the war zone, six of them reaching Queenstown on May 4th to increase the forces operating in the English Channel. The destroyers were also the first to capture a

Courtesy of New York Shipbuilding Corporation

HALF A MILLION HORSE POWER IN DESTROYER BOILERS

One phase of America's effort to mobilize her sea power to meet the submarine menace

Courtesy of the Emergency Fleet Corporation

AN AIRPLANE VIEW OF HOG ISLAND SHIPYARD

Showing fitting-out piers and the fifty shipways

U-boat for the Americans. It was the *U-58*, which was discovered off the entrance to Queenstown on November 17, 1917, by the *Fanning* and the *Nicholson*. Though the periscope of the submarine was raised only about a foot above the water, and only for an instant, an American lookout noticed it. The destroyers at once dropped depth charges set to explode beneath the surface, and these wrecked the motors of the submarine, blew off the rudder, and forced the enemy to shoot down to a depth of fully two hundred feet. When the stricken boat came shooting back it leaped out of the water and then went hurtling down again. As it disappeared the Yankee gunners sent several shells whizzing by the conning-tower, and more depth charges were released. But in a moment the U-boat came to the surface again, the hatch on the conning-tower flew up, and the crew streamed out upon the slippery deck and surrendered. The sea-cocks had, however, been opened, and in a few moments the submarine sank beneath the waters.

The second important force for anti-submarine work proved to be the 447 submarine-chasers which were authorized and built from the latter part of March, 1917, to March, 1918. These were wooden boats, 110 feet long, with a maximum speed of eighteen knots, and were intended to scout for submarines, drop depth bombs, and gain information through their delicate listening-devices, which had been perfected by American physicists during the early days of the war. These ubiquitous craft were so seaworthy that they crossed the Atlantic without difficulty, and kept the sea with any ship in the naval service. In the bombardment of Durazzo on the Albanian coast, the sub-chasers, as they were usually called, made a record unsurpassed by any other type of war-ship in the American Navy. While protecting the Allied squadron which was

bombarding the town on October 2, 1918, the twelve American sub-chasers sank two Austrian submarines that came out to attack the larger vessels. Also, in the English Chan-

ALLIED MINED AREAS AROUND THE BRITISH ISLES

Showing how submarine operations were difficult during the latter part of the World War. The southern part of the North Sea was not systematically mined but was dangerous to navigation.
From a British Admiralty Chart.

nel about Plymouth the presence of these tiny vessels stopped entirely German mine-laying and submarine attack in that vicinity; the very day they were withdrawn

the mine-laying began again. Though they had few spectacular encounters, the submarine-chasers contributed in no small measure to the safety of the seas. Not only did they possess an uncanny ability to discover the location of the submarine marauder, but their excessive generosity with depth bombs, their chief weapon, prevented enemy operations and shook the nerves of the stoutest German submarine sailors and commanders.

Though one or two German submarines appeared on the American coast in May, 1918, and destroyed a number of small vessels during the next three months, the adoption of the convoy system in June, 1917, prevented any interference with the movement of troops and supplies overseas. This convoy system must also be credited to American participation in the war. It was in accord with the chief policy of the United States for the conduct of the war, viz., unity of action. Until the United States entered the war, the organization and despatch of from fifty to a hundred merchant ships of various nationalities and speeds from a prearranged rendezvous off the coast would have been impossible. But after America ceased to be neutral and became a belligerent the work could be directed from American ports, and the naval forces of the United States —yachts, converted coastwise steamers, and regular naval vessels—were immediately available for the convoy service. The protection afforded by this system both in the western Atlantic and in the submarine-infested waters of the war zone was so perfect that not a life was lost of the 1,720,360 men thus escorted by the American Navy.

The final and decisive effort of America to throttle the submarine was the laying of the Northern Mine Barrage. The project of a mine barrier across the North Sea from Scotland to Norway was advanced by American naval officials in April, 1917, but the barrage was not completed

and the first submarine trapped till September, 1918. The mines were an American invention, of an improved type for deep water, and were exploded by electrical action even when the submarine was not in actual contact. One hundred thousand of these mines were manufactured, 85,000 were shipped abroad, and 70,000 were planted in an area extending for 230 miles in length and 20 in breadth, with only narrow channels along the Scottish and Norwegian coasts. The mines were manufactured in America, and assembled on the eastern coast of Scotland at Inverness and Invergordon by American sailors, and 80 per cent of them were laid by the American Navy. As the Straits of Dover were protected by a similar barrier, submarines found it almost impossible to reach the steamer lanes between England or France and the United States. Although only ten submarines are known to have been sunk by this stupendous enterprise it spelled the end of German ruthlessness at sea. As has been said, "The Germans pinned their faith to U-boats as the decisive factor. As the last and greatest instrumentality of ending the U-boat campaign, the mine barrage across the North Sea may be regarded as among the outstanding effective contributions to Allied success."[1]

That this concentration of American naval effort on the submarine menace was justified is shown by the fact that though a squadron of American battle-ships joined the British Grand Fleet in December, 1917, and took full part in its sweeps through the North Sea and in escorting merchant ships between Scotland and Norway,—a duty intended as a bait to tempt the Germans to come out and seek to cut off a few unsupported ships,—these battle-ships participated in no action with ships of their class. Another division of American battle-ships, stationed in Bantry Bay, Ireland, also did some escort duty, but its intended service

[1] *Report of the Secretary of the Navy*, 1919, p. 47.

as an attacking force upon German battle-cruiser raiders through the English Channel was never called for.

The second principal need of the Allies and of the United States were merchant ships in which to transport American troops and to carry across the Atlantic the food and munitions which only countries not used as battle-fields and with man-power undepleted by the strain of three years of war could furnish. One untapped source of shipping lay ready at hand,—a fact that the wily German Secretary of State for the Navy, Von Tirpitz, realized,—the 600,000 tons of German steamships which sought refuge in American harbors in the days after August 1, 1914. If Von Tirpitz had had his way, the captains of these vessels, in the weeks preceding the declaration of war by America, would have sailed to sea and sunk their ships to prevent their appropriation by the enemy. Instead, the commanders caused their engines to be more or less damaged but not to such an extent that the navy, with its electric welding-gangs, could not repair them and quickly put them into service as transports. In addition, 500,000 tons of Dutch shipping, which had been laid up in various harbors to avoid destruction at sea, also were seized later by "right of angary,"[1] and were thus by one sweep of the pen lawfully secured for the imperative military needs of the United States.

It was, however, in the actual construction of ships in numbers unparalleled in maritime history that the industrial and engineering genius of the American people most strikingly increased the nation's sea power.

The shipyards of the country had been since the beginning of the submarine sinkings fully occupied in turning out new cargo vessels for the Allies and for the expanding

[1] In maritime law, a forced service imposed on a vessel for public purpose, an impressment of a vessel.

American trade. Even before the declaration of war the need of America for ships was recognized by Congress, and the United States Shipping Board was created to regulate shipping and promote the development of an American merchant marine. When war came its powers were greatly extended, the Shipping Board itself was given authority to acquire and operate any vessels in the country, while to the Emergency Fleet Corporation, its subordinate agency, was delegated the work of constructing new vessels. Sufficient funds for both these purposes were provided.

Shipping authorities estimated that a tonnage of from 6,000,000 to 10,000,000 a year must be built to allow a safe margin over sinkings and to meet the increased demand produced by sending so many fighting-men to Europe. Yet in 1916, the country's best recent ship-building year, less than 300,000 tons of ships had been constructed. The story of how, in the year ending June 30, 1918, American yards turned out over a million gross tons of ships and how by August the United States had become the chief shipbuilding nation in the world, recalls to memory the achievement of an earlier period of American history.

It was only because the American people poured their wealth into the Treasury in exchange for Liberty Bonds that the Government was enabled to supply the funds for this intensified national effort that took second place only to the military operations themselves. The total amount authorized to be spent by the Shipping Board was more than three and a half billion dollars, the actual amount expended up to June 30, 1919, only a billion dollars less. Before such sums the three hundred and fifty millions spent on the Panama Canal pale into insignificance. And the results were also striking. In place of the 300,000 gross tons of shipping constructed in the year ending June 30, 1916,

the next year saw 664,479 tons built, 1918 recorded 1,300,868 tons, and the following year made still more startling progress with 3,326,621 tons. In May, 1919, the production of ships amounted to enough, if continued for a year, to increase the American commercial fleets over 5,000,000 tons.

The secret of much of this magnitude and rapidity of construction was the "fabricated" ship, one whose parts are prepared according to standardized patterns in steel-mills distant from the shipyards, and then sent to the coast to be assembled. These vessels were necessarily designed along simple lines, with flat decks, and with few curves which require special heating and bending in the yards. Such an assembling plant was the Hog Island Ship Yard, on the Delaware, south of Philadelphia, where one after another along the river extended for a mile and a quarter fifty ways for the construction of steel ships. While fifty were being built in these ways, twenty-eight others could be fitted out at the piers. When one realizes that in September, 1917, Hog Island was an uninhabitable and malarial marsh, and that five months later the first keel was laid, in eleven months the first hull launched, and the first complete ship delivered on December 3, 1918, we can appreciate something of the rapidity of American enterprise in reëstablishing an American merchant marine.

The armistice which was agreed to by Germany on November 11, 1918, effected changes in the sea power of the United States almost as epochal as those achieved by its own efforts at construction. On November 21, 1918, virtually the whole German navy sailed into the Firth of Forth in the presence of the British-American Grand Fleet in ignominious surrender, and the United States became the second naval power in the world. German submarines were turned over to the Allies and no more were to be built.

German merchant tonnage was to be handed over to the Allies to compensate as far as possible for the inroads of the U-boats.

The victorious ending of the World War was thus in most manifest fashion a performance in which American sea power had a full share. Although the armies of the Central Powers were not starved into surrender by sea power,—for the resources of Russia and Rumania prevented this,—the naval and maritime superiority of the United States and the other Allies did keep the Allied lines of communication from being severed by the German submarines, and, as Mahan says, communications dominate war. If the submarine menace had not been gradually eliminated, and if the ship tonnage which the United States had at hand and could construct had not been thrown into the balance, it is hard to see how the purely military movements on land could have proved effective. In this sense American sea power was decisive in the World War.

Lastly, it is well worth recalling that in the struggles in which sea power has been a factor since American history began its decisive influence has always been on the side of liberty. It wrested from Spain her brutal domination of the Atlantic seas; it safeguarded the free development of the English colonies along the Atlantic seaboard of North America; it won for the colonists their struggle for independence, and achieved for the young republic those traditions of independence, democracy, and enterprise which have come to be thought the qualities of the typical American. In the later years of the nineteenth century it showed the flag of America on every sea; it throttled the monster of slavery and disunion, and substituted for the deadening touch of Spanish colonial degeneracy upon the islands of the Caribbean and the Pacific the open hand of education and progress. Finally, in the struggle of de-

mocracy against imperialism sea power proved a decisive element which gave to the aspiring free peoples of Europe and America their chance to crush forever, let us hope, the arrogance of militarism and autocracy.

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